

## you look so good with him

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## you look so good with him

by [navyhurricane](#)

### Summary

Dream is in love with his best friend. Really, it isn't a problem and he's perfectly fine with staying friends (kind of) and can deal with George not feeling the same. It just hurts a little extra because George has a boyfriend, and he's everything Dream isn't.

Or so Dream thought.

### Notes

Inspired by Green - Cavetown

hi everyone! welcome back to a new part of the dnf songfics:))

this was not supposed to be this long, but i got inspired and now its multichapter hehe

as always, if cc's boundaries were to change or they were uncomfortable with this fic, it

will get removed.

with that said, enjoy!!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# Chapter 1

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream always told himself he was fine with being friends. He would be close to George, could still enjoy time with him and walk with him to their one shared English class. He would still be able to get coffee or iced teas with him and Sapnap, tease him about his rogue forehead curl and give him his green hoodie when the sun would hide behind the clouds. He was fine with it, and they were happy.

Until George got a boyfriend.

Nothing really changed between them, but now there was an extra person tagging along with them. Dream didn't walk George to class anymore, didn't feel right about joking over his hair in front of his boyfriend, but at least he was still around him. He's pretty sure George still has his hoodie, so maybe that's something.

Dream sighs, and rests his forehead on the countertop beside the register. He picked up a job at the little flower shop close to the university—Karl had teased him, telling him it was his time to find a tattoo artist partner and Dream had smacked him—and enjoyed it a lot. It's midday, with no major holidays nearby or husbands that made their wives angry, and the store is generally empty. Except for Sapnap, who just got out of his second class and decides to spend his free lunch time harassing Dream.

And by harassing, he means if Sapnap won't stop sending him pity looks across the shop he's going to stab him with these shears.

"What the hell is your problem, Sapnap? You look like a kicked puppy."

Sapnap jumps from where he was eyeing the prickles on a tiny cactus. "I don't know dude, you're just moping! George will be sad if you skip out on movie night again."

Of course.

Dream picks his head up and leans it on his elbow instead. The green apron is loose around his neck, and he flicks his nails against some of the pins he's stuck on it. "Why would he care? He's got Aaron." His mutter comes out more bitter than he really wanted, and Sapnap sighs. Dream winces, immediately guilty, and cranes his head around to stare at his friend. Sapnap looks sad in the way that you do when your bestfriend is in love with your other bestfriend who already has a boyfriend. It's stupid, alright?

"Dude."

A groan rips through the empty store. "I know, I know." Dream checks his phone, and waves his hand at Sapnap. "You're going to be late for your next class, I'll talk to you later."

Sapnap grimaces at the thought of his next math class, and starts towards the door. He stops, though, and turns around to pin Dream with a glare. The blond squirms despite himself and Sapnap jabs a finger at him. "Text him. Tell him you're coming. He thinks you're angry at him."

And gee, if that isn't the icing on the top.

"Alright, I get it, Pandas. Have fun in class."

"Bye, dummy."

The bell chimes, and Dream is left alone once again. He sighs, probably the thousandth one since he started his shift two hours ago, and gets up from behind the till to check on the automatic watering system.

Aaron is great. He's friendly, a couple inches taller than George and the gap between his teeth is somewhat charming. His hair is longer than Dream's, and he doesn't constantly tease George about his colorblindness in the flower shop. He likes the pictures that George takes on his expensive camera, even the bad ones, and when they get drinks he always offers to pay for one of the table members. Aaron likes cats and video games, and his favorite color is purple. He and George like to study in the library until it closes, and cuddle with a specific baby blue blanket over their legs when it's movie night.

Aaron is great.

Aaron isn't Dream.

Dream pokes the soil on one plant, barely reading the tags. George likes the flowers here, says that they still look pretty despite him not being able to see half of them. Dream would see him nearly every shift, sometimes with an iced tea in hand for the younger and always with a wide grin. It was the best part of Dream's day, and he looked forward to every shift.

Until George got a boyfriend, and Dream started to get texts that said *sorry, maybe next time*:

He's fine. He's perfectly fine with this. Dream eyes the stems on one bushy plant, and frowns. He knew that George didn't feel the same, wasn't infatuated with how he talked or moved, wasn't in love with the way his fingers danced over his camera settings. Dream hasn't seen him take pictures in a while; he misses the way the camera would cover his face, just momentarily, and then come down to reveal a shining grin and brighter eyes.

George doesn't feel the same, and Dream has—guiltily—been avoiding him since he got with Aaron. It's only been a little over a month, and the distancing has apparently only become relevant when Dream skipped out on movie night last week. The self-proclaimed Crew Boys (and Aaron, maybe a few others) typically gather on Thursday nights at Karl and Quackity's to binge whatever the latest craze is, or some fucky literature thing Karl heard about in his films class. There's never a shortage of things to watch.

But anyways, Dream skipped out. Said he got called into a shift, had to work overtime. He was actually holed up in his and Sapnap's dorm, eating popcorn and scrolling through Twitter posts and TikTok. He would have gotten away with it too: Quackity is a good actor, Sapnap probably felt guilty, and Karl wasn't even really paying attention.

It would have worked if Dream had remembered to turn his Snap location off, or at least logged out of the app. George had screenshotted it, sent it to him with a ? and nothing else, and Dream had never felt more guilty in his life.

He groans to himself as the bell chimes at the front. Putting on his best customer service smile, Dream realizes that he's going to have to show to this one tonight, even if it means seeing Aaron and George cuddled together on Karl's shitty beanbag chair. The customer wants the flowers in the front with the brown middles—Dream maintains his smile as he politely tells them that they're *sunflowers* and wonders how an adult has made it this far in life without that knowledge.

Dream is cutting the stems and wrapping them as the thought crosses his mind.

*Oh, they look like his eyes.*

Fuck, he's down bad, isn't he?

The bell chimes again as the customer leaves, satisfied with the three sunflowers in a bundle and poking at the yellow petals as they walk past the large front windows. Dream rests his head in his palms, and gets comfortable behind the desk. If George thinks he's angry at him, maybe he should bring him flowers to apologize. Aaron probably wouldn't mind, they're just friends. Dream chews his lip, glancing around the shop for the ones that George would maybe like the most—

Dream's gaze lands on the cornflowers in the corner by the window, almost taunting him in the sunlight. He remembered the way George stared at them, entranced by the color he could see most vibrantly. His fingers had brushed the plant, barely touching the pretty blues before pulling away and saying something to Dream about the pale flowers right beside them.

*Look, it's us.*

*What do you mean, it's us?*

*You're green, and I'm blue. Obviously.*

*You're only blue because it's the only color you can confidently see, silly. Plus, almost all flowers have green—*

*Shut up and let me take a flower.*

Dream clocks out of his shift four hours later, a bundle of cornflowers and daisy's wrapped in his hand. He thinks that they'll match his bedroom perfectly.

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When Dream gives the flowers to George, he grins and takes them with careful hands. Dream rubs the back of his neck, stutters over an apology that he definitely didn't prepare on his drive home, but George just pats his forearm and says that he's going to put them in water. It's not anything important, but Dream knows that if George was actually upset, he wouldn't be standing at the sink, staring at the bundle on the counter as he fills the tallest glass he has with water.

Dream had cut them a little shorter just because he knows George has no vases. He hopes that George secretly appreciates it.

They're alone in George's apartment, as Dream had texted George that they needed to speak quickly before movie night. George had told him to just come over, that Aaron was supposed to be coming late to movie night but should be over within two hours. As Dream stares at the various pictures of George and his boyfriend scattered around the flat, he has to pretend that strike of relief wasn't there.

"So how is everything going? Sap told me that you had a few emails over photo ops." Dream tears his gaze away from a particular image of George and Aaron. Aaron's arm is wrapped around George and the angle is somewhat bad, but the thing that Dream focuses on is the fact that George is wearing Dream's hoodie.

Dream leans against the wall between the living room and kitchen, and simply watches George. He's wearing a grey long sleeve today, with soft looking jeans and mismatched socks.

He looks good.

George hums and shuts the tap off. Something clinks against the counter, and Dream looks up to see him carefully arranging the flowers. "I had a few good ones, some of them were families and some were couples. One of them had quite a bit of cash to blow, so I've been spending more time editing those pictures." George doesn't look at him, but just gently brushes his fingers over the fluff of the cornflowers. "It's been keeping me busy, so I'm happy I can still make it to movie nights."

The jab isn't directed but Dream feels it all the same. He sits at the counter, taps his fingers on the smooth surface. "Does the lens still work alright?"

"Yes, Dream," George is grinning, Dream can hear it in his words, "It works just fine."

It's quiet, save for George humming along to the radio on the fridge. There's a few more pictures and notes pinned there, and Dream eyes the one that says *need milk!!!!* because it's everything he wanted with George, the mundane and simple life where the only issues would be George running out of apple juice and Dream's cat chewing on his computer cords. George says something about getting snacks ready for their friends, and Dream hauls himself up from his seat to help.

They pop popcorn, and Dream pulls a package of gummy worms from his jacket pocket with a sly grin. He holds them above his head, cackling at the way George jumps to reach the candy and fails. Their arms bump, George is laughing, and Dream can't stop smiling. He feels warm, trapped in a bubble in the kitchen as butter wafts through the air and the sun gets low enough to peek through the windows.

George snatches the candy whilst Dream is distracted by the light, and rips open the package with a self-satisfied grin. Then, he shivers, like the change in time means he gets cold.

"Stay here and answer the door if people come, I'm going to go change." George calls out to Dream, taking the gummies with him and leaving Dream helpless in the kitchen. The bubble is broken, slowly deflating as Dream shakes the popcorn and snoops in the pantry for salt. He sings along to the soft radio, not really absorbing the lyrics as he pours the popcorn into a bowl. It's just after seven, so people should be showing up soon. Footsteps alert Dream, and he turns towards George.

"Hey, where do you want th—" Dream cuts his words off as George walks into view. He's wearing a green hoodie, massive and tucked into the tops of his jeans on one side. The sleeves are rolled, exposing the fluffy lime inside, and George looks for all the world as comfortable as he can be. The hood pillows around his neck, and Dream's gaze drops to the black smiley on the front. "Um—w—where did you want this?"

*Jesus, he looks so good in green.*

"Oh!" George takes the outstretched popcorn bowl and walks into his living room. "I'll put it here for now, Quackity is probably going to tear into it as soon as he gets here." George places the bowl on the coffee table, and Dream feels frozen where he stands.

George is wearing his hoodie.

He's wearing Dream's hoodie in his shared apartment with his boyfriend because George sees Dream as a friend, and George doesn't love him like that.

Dream's chest hurts, and as if sensing his turmoil, George turns to face him. His brow is pinched, and there's worry dancing in his eyes. "Dream? What-"

There's fast paced knocking at the door, and then it crashes open. "It's time to get feral!" sings Quackity, trailed by Sapnap and Karl. George blinks and Dream sighs, pushing down his emotions to greet his friends.

He doesn't miss the confused look George sends him, but he chooses to ignore it.

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Dream is sitting beside George in the diner, flicking sugar packets at him with Sapnap when George's phone rings. It's on the table between Dream and George's elbows, and reads a simple *aaron<3*. The brunet blinks, flips the screen over, and Dream aches at the loving look that comes across his face as he picks it up.

"Hello? Hey... yeah, we're just at Puffy's, you coming?" George looks to Dream and Sapnap for confirmation. Dream nods immediately, and sees the way Sapnap shoots him a look. George is already looking out the booth window, the back of his head facing Dream. "Yeah, we're in the regular spot. Hm? Oh, Dream and Sapnap. Wh—Okay... see you soon... bye."

The call is ended, and George has a light flush across his cheekbones. It doesn't quite overshadow the slightly confused look he aims at his phone, but Dream thinks he still looks adorable, and Sapnap's next sugar missile nails George between the eyebrows. "Was that loverboy?"

George scowls at him and throws the sugar back. "Yes, and don't call him that. He should be here soon."

"Great," Dream mumbles, softening his meaning with a smile that doesn't quite meet his eyes. Sapnap kicks him under the table gently, and Dream kicks him back, less gently. Sapnap glares at him, and Dream just flicks more sugar. "Do we want to get snacks? I really want fries and Puffy's here today."

George and Sapnap immediately nod and Dream gets up out of the booth to go order. They just got drinks before, so he just walks up to the register and gets the classic Bucket'o'Fries for the table.

Puffy grins at him as he speaks, and they chat for a little as he gets his wallet out to pay. The door rings behind him, but Puffy is gushing about her possible future renovation and Dream is sucked into the conversation.

"What, you can't kill the vibe of this place! It's too.. uh... chill?"

Puffy snorts and reaches back into the kitchen slot to put the order through to her staff. "Chill? Don't worry, I'm just upgrading a few machines in the back so your precious safe-haven is untouched."

Dream grins. He really does like it here, and Puffy is doing wonderfully with the business. "Perfect. Do you want me to wait here for the fries?"

She waves him off and adjusts her apron. "Go sit down, hun, I'll bring them out when they're ready."

Dream nods and turns, feeling somewhat refreshed after the chat and walks back to his table. He tries his best to not falter in his pace when he sees another person sitting next to George. Dream cleanly slides into the seat next to Sapnap. The sugar packets have been mostly cleaned up, and a waitress has delivered three milkshakes to their table.

The blond grins at Aaron as he sits down, and receives one in return—God, he really need to stop attributing negative emotions with this poor guy.

"Did you get—"

Dream cuts George off, not unkindly, "Yes, Georgie, I got the pail of potatoes. Puffy said she'll bring them out."

Aaron snorts and leans his arm across the back of the booth, fingers playing with George's opposite shoulder. "'Georgie'? Even you don't let me call you that."

Dream grins, on the edge of slightly nervous, and George sighs.

"He doesn't call me that by my choice, idiot. It's just to bother me."

And not gonna lie, that stings a little. Dream falters, grin a little more fake and he knows Sapnap notices, sees the way George blinks at his lack of response and opens his mouth—presumably to take it back—but Sapnap swiftly covers for him as he reaches for George's milkshake. "Dude, you got strawberry? Wanna swap?"

"Get your own drink, you idiot!" George snaps, but there's a smile playing at his mouth when he retrieves his drink. Sapnap just pouts dramatically, but starts drinking his own as Aaron mentions something about classes.

Dream reaches for his drink, suddenly not as thirsty as he was before and feeling *terrible* about it, because Aaron is talking about the stress of his business courses and all Dream can think of is how pretty George looks today.

"Some fries for some hungry guys?" Puffy drops the bucket off, literally a decked out ice cream pail full of steaming fries. There's stickers on the sides of the plastic and Dream traces a few with his fingers as he moves it to the center of the table. His leg is bouncing under the table, and as he pops a fry into his mouth, he feels oddly overstimulated and vulnerable.

He doesn't know if it was the attention brought to his nickname for George or the way he hates himself for feeling envious of Aaron because Aaron is great, but he feels jittery.

The conversation continues, and Dream doesn't input as much as he normally would. He chooses to listen, more content with staying silent and playing with the little fidget toy he always keeps in his pocket. He doesn't have any shame about fiddling with it, and keeps both hands on the table as he swirls the joystick around and around on the green and white cube. The bucket of fries is slowly eaten away, and Dream sips at his mint-cookies and crème milkshake before Sapnap engages him again.

"Dream, what even happened to that shirt? I don't remember seeing it in your laundry."

Dream snorts. "Why're you looking through my laundry, huh?" It earns a few chuckles and Sapnap just shrugs. "Nah, seriously, are you talking about the red one? Because I have no clue. I feel like someone just stole it from the laundry machines with the way it vanished."

Sapnap finishes off the rest of his drink, poking his straw at the bottom. Aaron is quiet, and George



is shifting in his seat. "I mean, it literally says 'Dream' across the lower back and nobody else on campus has that nickname. I feel like you would have known if it got snatched."

Dream just shrugs. The red shirt was from his first year at university, and one of the options was a simple red sweatshirt with the university logo on the front and the option for back detailing. It was barely a sweatshirt, more just a thinner long sleeve with a fuzzy inside and it was a little big on Dream. He had worn it all the time, until one week during finals and a stress-haze he couldn't find it anymore. Now, a month later, the shirt has apparently resurfaced into conversation.

"Whatever, I hope whoever has it is enjoying it. The only thing it was good for was helping my cologne last all day so now there's someone on campus who definitely smells like me. Kind of creepy if you ask—"

Aaron coughs, and George purses his lips. Dream pauses, unnerved in the way he was just cut off, and shoots a questioning glance at George like *the heck is up with your man, dude?* He isn't making eye-contact, and the arm Aaron has around him looks stiffer than it did a second ago. George looks vaguely *guilty*.

Dream glances down at the fries bucket, and sees there's only a few left. He nudges it towards George. "Finish them off, I'll take the bucket back when we finish our drinks."

The guilty look fades as George takes the fries, and Aaron snatches one from his pale hands with a sly grin. The tension that was there a moment ago is gone, vanished in less than a second and has Dream wondering if he saw anything at all. The next few minutes are filled with milkshake slurping and Sapnap complaining about his classes, and then it's just after one in the afternoon.

Dream knows he works in about a half-hour, and collects the cups and bucket before dropping them off at the dish counter for Puffy. He leaves a tip on the table for when the other three leave, and exits the building after reaching across the table to ruffle George's hair; he at least needs to pretend at some normalcy, and George just laughs and swats him away.

It's when he's sitting at the flower shop counter, twiddling his thumbs because it's a Thursday, that he gets a text from Sapnap. He pulls out his phone, and is surprised to see a picture of George and Aaron. They're still sitting together, but Aaron's arm is no longer around George and the flush on George's cheeks is gone. The brunet is staring out the window, something in his expression that makes Dream's chest twist, and Aaron is on his phone. Dream flicks out of the picture, and reads the text that comes in before his eyes.

From: snapmap

*they were acting weird right after you left*

*aaron said smhthn about red and george got quiet*

*thats weird right im not being stupid*

*normally theyre all over each other n stuff*

From: pissbaby

*kinda i guess*

*idk*

From: snapmap

*dont idk me bro*

*u didnr even want aaron over there*

*dnt think i didnt see that homie*

From: pissbaby

*sorry*

*thanks tho for the help*

From: snapmap

*u looked like u needed it*

*not coming to movie night?*

From: pissbaby

*mb, i work late*

*wilbur wants to extend store hours for some reason so im here til 10*

*i think he just wants to torture me*

From: snapnap

*fair*

*ok well if we see u we see u and if we dont ill give gogy a kiss for u*

From: pissbaby

*fuck you*

From: snapmap

*<3*

Dream sighs and shuts his phone off. A long shift at the flower shop isn't terrible because virtually nobody comes in. It stays in business through online orders and weddings, and maybe the odd baby shower. Dream even commissioned for a gender reveal once, and was then reminded how much he didn't get along with certain types of straight people. However, a long shift at the flower shop means he would get to movie night late, and he has class early tomorrow.

It's not really a problem, but it's definitely an excuse.

If he doesn't show, would it be obvious that he's avoiding George? And what was up with him and Aaron after Dream left? If he does show, would he be unwelcome?

No, Dream shakes his head. He wouldn't, because George can easily balance a boyfriend and bestfriend in his life. There shouldn't be issues between him and Aaron, and when Dream thinks about it, nothing comes to mind.

Whatever. Dream hooks up his phone to the shop's Bluetooth speakers, and clicks on a random playlist. Indie music echoes through the shop. He won't go tonight, and he'll look for that stupid sweater when he gets home, and everything will be fine.

Everything will be fine.

---

"What do you mean 'they're fighting'?"

Quackity nails him with a look that makes Dream glare back. They're in Karl and Quackity's dorm room, Quackity on his bed beside Karl and Dream sitting on the floor. Sapnap is in the beanbag with full control of the Alexa currently playing music. "I mean they're fighting, stupid, what else do you want me to say?"

Dream fumbles. He must look like that stupid meme, the white cat on a stool with its hands out. "Uh, *why*?"

"You think George would tell me that? Dream, c'mon man, you didn't even know about it, and you're you! What makes you think he would tell me?" Quackity adjusts the guitar on his lap and scrolls through his phone on his other hand. "George just texted and said him and Aaron wouldn't be around for a bit, they're figuring shit out. Nothing else."

"So they're not fighting?"

Quackity groans and falls back on the bed. Karl scratches his neck and avoids Dream's gaze. "I think what Quackity is trying to say is Aaron and George have never had to take time to 'figure things out'. Majority of their arguments are solved with compromises and deals, they're both levelheaded that way. This is different."

Dream runs a hand down his face. Quackity and Karl have a point. Aaron and George *don't* fight, have never really had a bad argument since they started dating. George even mentioned that in passing once, that they usually settled the problem quickly and fairly, and neither party lost out.

Dream had just added it to the list of things he would never be able to have with George, and had

nodded and smiled his pride at his friend for being mature in those situations.

"Soo..." Sapnap kicks his socked feet against the floor, "They're not coming to movie night tomorrow?"

Karl shrugs. The Alexa in the corner rolls onto a new song. "I guess it depends if they 'figure it out' or not."

Quackity sits up and strums a note on the guitar. "My bet is they argue, smash for an hour, and then get over it."

Dream chokes, and Sapnap reaches over to pat his back with a mock solemn face. Quackity cackles and stands up, placing his guitar back on the stand. Karl giggles softly and Sapnap suggest they play MarioKart to distract themselves, but Dream doesn't feel as light about the situation.

He's worried, of course. Fighting with a significant other is never fun, and Dream wouldn't want to be in that position. He's also worried because George didn't say anything to him. Quackity was right about that part, that if George would tell anyone about the fight, it would be Dream himself. And George didn't even say they were having issues.

He's sulking a bit, out of his worry and guilt. The guilt comes from the stupid, stupid inkling that maybe the fight will lead to them breaking up. He doesn't want that for George. He doesn't want to watch him go through a breakup with a guy he really likes, doesn't want to watch him fall apart because he feels so alone.

Dream rolls the joystick on his cube and watches the small monitor as Karl passes Quackity for first place. Maybe he should text George, and see if he's alright. Dream grabs his phone.

From: dweamie

*big q spilled the beans, u ok?*

Dream turns his phone off, and goes to put it in his pocket when it buzzes in his hand. He turns the screen back towards his face.

From: gogy

*Just fine.*

Dream frowns. That's odd. George doesn't typically use capitals or punctuation, but here he is using both in a short text. It could be because he's upset, but even then he isn't usually so short with people not concerned in the problem.

Dream slides open the keyboard again.

From: dweamie

*ok, let me know if theres anything i can do to help:)*

*u wanna go to puffys for lunch tomo? after english?*

From: gogy

*maybe, ill let you know*

*thanks dream:)*

"What the fuck?" Dream says, staring at the phone in his hand. His words are sharp and they catch the attention of the other three immediately. Princess Peach goes zooming past Sapnap's Donkey Kong, and Karl turns towards him on the bed.

Quackity stops popping M&M's into his mouth. "What?"

Dream turns his phone around and shows the texts. "That isn't George. I'm not texting George right now."

Sapnap takes the phone and Dream sees his eyes flick up to the contact. He frowns at Dream. "Uh, it seems like you're texting him, dude. It's his phone number."

"Just—" Dream waves his hand around, frustrated at his lack of words, "The punctuation? The capitals? When has George cared about that in his texting?" Reaching out with one hand, Dream taps the back of his phone in Sap's hands. He meets his eyes over the top of the device. "Look at the last text. Right after my name. Tell me I'm not crazy."

Sapnap's eyes flick down, and Dream sees the moment when it registers.

"What the fuck?" Sapnap throws the phone on the bed, and Karl swoops it up. "I take it back, that's not Gogy."

"Okay, well who could be on his phone? And pretending to be him?" Karl hands the phone back to Dream, "That's just weird, man."

Dream fidgets with his phone, picking at the case. He feels cold, even under his grey hoodie. "Should I text again? It's what I would normally do."

Quackity scratches his cheek. "Send a meme, I guess. How would George normally respond?"

"Normally? He would just ignore it and clown me about it the next time I saw him."

"Do it." Sapnap has his phone in his hands as well, the MarioKart game long forgotten. "I'm creeping his Snap and it says he's home."

Dream nods, and blindly sends off a random Minecraft meme. It's a stupid one, something to do with an Enderman and more of a reaction shitpost, but Dream barely sees it as The notifications go from Delivered to Read 9:09pm, and then three bubbles appear on the screen.

From: gogy

*what even is that?*

*i'm going to bed, don't spam me.*

Dream's breath catches in his throat, and he types out a response. Karl is still beside him, and Sapnap is furiously typing on his phone.

From: dweamie

*goodnight:)*

George plays Minecraft. He's played it for years, and him and Dream always play when they have a scrap of matching free time. George knows what an Enderman is, and George never responds to the shitposts Dream sends him until they see each other in person.

The four of them stare at the screen. They then look up, share one long continuous look, and Quackity blows out a breath.

"Yeah. What the fuck is right."

---

It's been a few days since the texting incident, and George met up with Dream at Puffy's like nothing was wrong. He had looked tired, though, with dark smudges under his eyes and an air of exhaustion that came with prolonged arguments. As much as he wanted to Dream didn't ask him about the fight, and George offered no information.

They see less and less of George as the week progresses. It's weird, seeing as Aaron was already on his way to being integrated (sadly) into their little group, and was even talking to a few of their friends outside the immediate contact. Bad had joined Dream for a study group in the library once and made the offhand comment that *George's boyfriend is... well, he's something*, and if Bad doesn't have a word for what you are, you definitely need to fix yourself.

Dream thought that was odd—that Aaron had distanced himself, that is—but then again for all Dream knew, George and him were still fighting.

(Sapnap had used the term 'on a break' to describe it, but that sounded too much like Ross and Rachel's toxic relationship and he didn't want to attribute that to George's.)

Dream really only saw George when they were in the university, walking to class or going for lunch. He went home to eat now, didn't talk much about Aaron compared to what he used to, and just seemed more unsure in general. Dream hated it, and even with the suspicion that Aaron was reading the texts on George's phone, he didn't act like anything was different. Maybe Dream should have said something, but he really just wasn't sure and didn't want to widen the crack between the couple anymore.

Sapnap was surely tired of his moping as well, having limited communication with George and

third and fourth-wheeling with Quackity when Karl came over. The tallest and shortest (Quackity is still in denial) made it their goal to shittily serenade the not-quite-a couple, all while Sapnap glared daggers into Dream's back because the blond knew just how much he wanted to make out that night. Oops.

Anyways.

George is pretty much missing at this point, and Dream isn't a fan. It's not that he's dependent on the other, but he definitely misses his bestfriend and the air of comfort that comes with him. Sue him, but Dream is a slightly clingy motherfucker and he misses George. He's had enough of only catching glimpses of him in the halls and their only interaction being goodbye waves. Dream misses George, and he's about to do something about it.

It's easy enough to drive to George's apartment to surprise him with drinks and banana bread—the Starbucks kind, because it's both their comfort food—and balance his drinks tray on his arm as he heads up the stairs to the third floor. George doesn't have a car but Aaron does, and Dream is pretty sure he saw the silver Malibu beside a blue Toyota he's never seen before.

Dream hums to himself, something like giddiness bubbling in his stomach and cold drinks dripping onto his hands. George likes this green thing called matcha, and Dream thinks it tastes like sweet and muted milk.

Dream reaches George's door, and swaps the drinks to one arm before reaching for his keys. George gave him one when he first moved in.

He unlocks the door, but it jerks when he goes to open it, like the burglar chain is on. Dream peeks through the crack and frowns at the telling little extra lock. That's weird, because George doesn't typically lock the door with the chain unless it's at night.

"What the hell," Dream mutters, and closes the door so he can knock properly. Then, he cracks it open again and calls through the crack, "George?"

There's no verbal answer, but as Dream goes to close the door and text his friend because he really thought he was home, what the heck, footsteps catch his attention and he perks up.

"Dream? What are you doing here?" Scratch that. It's Aaron. Dream forces a smile as he closes the door and hears the chain get pulled off. Aaron stands in front of the open door, shirt wrinkled and hair a mess. He looks like he just rolled out of bed.

Dream feels the urge to rub his neck but his hands are full. He feels oddly *caught*. "Uh, is George around? I was gonna drop these off for him."

Aaron's gaze drops to the drinks and food, and he shakes his head. "He got a call about a last minute shoot. Said he wouldn't be back until late. Do you want me to...?"

"Oh! Yeah, here," Dream hands him the green drink and the bag with the snack, and licks his lips nervously. His good mood is gone, and he just wanted to see George. Damn. The two of them stand there for a second longer, until Aaron shifts with the things in hand. He's still standing in the middle of the door, and Dream gets the message loud and clear that he isn't coming inside. That irks him, because Aaron doesn't even own the place. "Well, I guess I'll go. Sorry for bothering you, uh..."

Dream trails off, unsure where to go with this and even more exposed with the neutral expression Aaron is giving him. Something behind the door creaks, and Dream's gaze is attracted there.

Aaron swiftly closes the door more, and tightly smiles at Dream. "I'll tell him you stopped by. Have a nice day, Clay."

The door shuts. Dream gapes, not sure if he's more pissed off by having it closed in his face or the fact that Aaron just used his real name. Only close friends and family have that privilege and unless his mom is angry at him, even she calls him Dream. What the fuck?

Dream stomps down the stairs, uncaring of the clanging that rings out under his boots. He feels colder now, gripping only one peach tea and barely tasting it. He walks by that stranger blue Toyota, and sits in his car. He throws around the idea of texting George, and gives in with a sigh.

From: dweamie

*hey, stopped by your apartment*

*didnt know you werent home, sorry:(*

*i left you that gross matcha drink tho and banana bread for after your shoot!!!!!!*

Dream sets his phone in a cupholder, knows that George doesn't check his phone during shoots and knows he'll see the text later. He wonders if it's far, if Aaron drove him there with smiles and music and a kiss goodbye when they got to the venue. Dream glares at the Malibu, and leans back against his seat. Good mood gone, stress-headache incoming.

He had just wanted to see George, to try and go back to before when Dream coming to his apartment unannounced was typical and when Dream didn't have to worry about offending boyfriends. He grinds his palms into his eyes, and revels in the light spots that appear.

He's jealous. Not really of Aaron himself, but what Aaron gets to hold and what he gets to touch. It's not fair, but Dream loves him anyways. George is still in his life, and he's happy. He's happy with Aaron.

Just as Dream puts his car in reverse and goes to drive out of the parking lot, a woman walks out of the apartment building. Dream doesn't pay attention to her, and misses when she trails a finger over the silver Malibu and unlocks the blue car beside it.

---

It's Sapnap's great idea to get George out of his apartment for a few hours: a stupid club.

"You're seriously wearing that?" Sapnap leans against the doorframe, arms crossed and judging Dream as per usual. Dream glares at him and turns back to the mirror.

"What's wrong with it? I'm not trying to impress anyone." It's just a simple black tee and looser dark jeans, and a chain tucked under his shirt. His hair is messy, fluffy and dried from his shower prior, and Dream has a few rings slid onto his fingers. Sapnap is dressed similarly in all black, but his style aims towards more of the techwear aesthetic with the various traps and slimming cargo pants. There's chains dangling from his pockets and belt, and the little fire pendant Karl gave him



for his birthday is secured around his neck.

Dream runs a hand through his hair. "Just because I'm not styled to your perfection doesn't mean I look *bad*."

Sapnap sighs and walks towards Dream's dresser drawers. "You don't look bad but you definitely look plain. Wear a croptop or something." Dream snorts, and Sapnap throws him a different black shirt, a high-necked tanktop that he really only wears when he goes on runs. Dream looks at the fabric, and then at Sapnap, who is already heading out of the room. "Put that on, and then we can go pickup Quackity and Karl. George said he would meet us there."

Dream pulls off his t-shirt. The tank is tight against his skin and his arms are completely exposed, but he knows the bar is going to be hot anyways. "Is Aaron coming? What shoes do I wear?"

"The Docs, and yes, he is. Apparently him and George kind of made up so I guess we'll see tonight. Maybe I can blame it on the alcohol when I fight him about him going on George's phone."

"You have no proof, Snapnaps."

"Fuck you, I have all the proof I need." Sapnap pokes his head back in the room. "You dressed? Let's go."

They get down to Dream's car, and Sapnap drops the topic of suspicion over Aaron texting Dream on George's phone as soon as Karl comes into sight, the brunet dressed in a cropped and baggy purple sweatshirt and black shorts. There's fishnet leggings crossing down his thighs and into his boots, and Quackity looks pretty much no different than he always does.

Sapnap waves at the pair as they walk towards the car, and they're on the way to the club without a hitch. Sapnap is on AUX, and soon the poor speakers of the vehicle are rattling away.

Dream pulls into the parking lot, finding a decent spot with good lighting and away from the masses by the door. There's a bit of a line outside, but it seems to be moving fast for a Friday night. All of them have club memberships anyways, avid members of one of the better queer clubs in the city.

Q4Y stands for Queers for Years, and it's one of the Crew Boys favorite places to hit. They're comfortable there, and it's an accepting atmosphere with decently priced drinks. The dance floor isn't bad, and the music is always good. Dream locks his car, stuffs the keys into his pocket safely for when he drives the drunkies home later, and follows the trio that's now skipping with their hands held in a line towards the door. Idiots.

The club smells like body spray and people, and maybe the odd hint of leather. The interior is made up of blacks and whites, and the classic ROY. G. BIV colors splashed wherever meets the decorators fancy. Dream snags them a table quickly, feeling the appreciative glances of club-goers caressing over his arms and torso. Maybe the tank wasn't a good idea, but Dream has to say that it feels nice to be appreciated.

The music is loud and vibrating in his chest when Sapnap tugs him down to yell into his ear. "I'm gonna go get drinks, keep an eye out for Gogy!" And then he's gone, disappearing into the throng of people and out of Dream's sight. He's not worried; Sapnap can hold his own and this place is typically safe. Dream sits down at the table, talks to a bouncing Karl and Quackity all while looking for a certain brunet. Sapnap didn't say what he was wearing, but for some reason Dream keeps an eye out for blue.

It's telling when he does see George, and that's the color he's featuring today.

Dream freezes as the lights flash over him. He's on the dance floor, arms up and eyes closed. He's wearing a black skirt and platform boots, and a cropped blue shirt that is more a shoulder cover than anything. Dream can see the fishnet waistband peeking onto his abdomen, and the way George throws his head back and exposes the simple choker band around his throat. There's jewelery dangling from his ears and his hair is slightly damp with sweat, and Dream thinks he falls in love all over again.

Sapnap slams a tray on the table and breaks Dream out of his trance. He looks in the general direction of the dance floor, and makes a face. Dream can't exactly read it. "Looks like we found George. They must have fixed their problem." Dream turns his head back towards George and for the first time, sees Aaron behind him, hands pressed under George's shirt and over his hips, turning George's head to kiss him over his shoulder.

Dream looks away and wishes he didn't drive tonight.

Karl reaches for a clear shot glass on the tray, and Dream blinks in shock at how stacked it is. "Sapnap, what the hell?! I thought we were easing into it?"

Sapnap only cackles and grabs a shot for himself. "No way, man, balls deep and full sends only. Cheers!"

Dream can only watch as his three friends messily tap their shots, then the table, and then down them with matching grimaces on their faces. Dream rolls his eyes and reaches for the bottle of Coke on the tray, quickly checking the sealed cap before cracking it open and sipping it. The club is hot, and he can already feel himself sweating in his clothing. He can't imagine how hot it must be for George, pressed between people and moving so effortlessly.

The song changes and the lights strobe, and Karl is dragging Sapnap out of the booth and onto the dancefloor. Quackity grins at them, and excuses himself to the backrooms, where it's a little quieter and more chatting friendly. Dream waves him on, and is soon left alone with the table.

He loses sight of George with the music change, and pulls out his phone to send him a quick text.

From: dweamie

*we're at a table by the rooster poster, meet me here?*

Dream doesn't expect George to respond right away, but hopes that he at least has his phone on him to see the text. Maybe Aaron has it, because he's pretty sure George's skirt doesn't have pockets. Dream winces as the image of George in a *skirt* runs through his head again, and leans his elbows on the table. He looked good, for what Dream saw of him, and Aaron is one lucky fucking guy.

He distracts himself with games on his phone, probably looking like a Debbie Downer in his little corner of the bar. Dream sends off a few snaps, laughs at the Snap story Karl posted of him and Sapnap on the dance floor. He answers a few texts from classmates, just mundane conversations that seem out of place in a queer bar. His phone vibrates in his hand, and Dream's gaze flicks up to the banner.

From: gogy

*bathrooms pls*

*i need help*

Dream is on his feet before the text is even off his screen. There's crowds between him and the bathrooms, but Dream weaves and pushes gently but urgently.

The bathrooms are big and open, and split into three categories: female, male, and gender neutral. When they come to the bar with girls and they want safety, Dream typically takes them to the neutral one so he can stand watch outside their door. It's also helpful when he needs to hold hair. This time, there's no girls in their party and Dream pushes the door to the males bathroom open, blinking at the light change and the same kind of decoration theme.

There's a few people in here, mulling around or sitting on the sink counters. One sink is running. The music muffles as the door shuts behind him, and a petite guy leaning beside the hand dryer gives Dream a look up and down. Dream just give him a tightlipped smile, and glances around. Where's George?

"George?" He calls softly, heart in his throat. George said he needs help, so where—

"Last stall, Dream."

Dream makes a beeline for the door, and gently raps his knuckles on the dark gray metal. He can see a slumped shadow under the door. "It's me, I'm coming in..." He pushes the door carefully, and it swings open freely.

George is sitting on the closed toilet, fingers wrapped around his phone tightly. The screen is open to his and Dream's conversation, and Dream shuts the door behind him. He locks it. George has his head tilted down and Dream can't see his face, but there's a minute tremble to his shoulders and his leg is bouncing.

Dream swallows, chest aching at the mere sight of him, and crouches down so he can see his face. George's hair is covering it, messy and slightly damp.

"George? Are you okay? Can you look at me, sweetheart?" The pet name slips before he can catch it, but George doesn't react and snuffles. Dream tenses, and shuffles closer to he can set a careful hand on his knee. George seems to curl into himself, but doesn't pull his leg away. The blond frowns, more than worried now, and tilts his head to see his face. Dream blinks, and he feels his eyebrows crumple. "Oh, George..."

The brunet isn't crying, but he might as well be with the effort to hold his tears back. George's bottom lip is chewed and raw, tucked between his teeth tightly. His shoulders are pulled in, and there's a flush to his cheeks that comes with alcohol and what Dream knows as George's Emotions Face. Crying doesn't come easy to George, but when it does, he gets pale around his face and his cheekbones turn cherry red.

George looks up at Dream, and licks his red lips. Dream wonders if they're bleeding.

"Can you take me home?"

Dream stares at his face, and watches helplessly as a single tear slips down George's face. He

reaches up, brushes a large palm against his cheek and wipes it away with his thumb. George holds his wrist, presses his face into his hand, and Dream *hurts*.

"Of course I can, are you alright? Feel sick? Hurt?" Dream feels like he's talking to a skittish animal, his voice a soft whisper above the background noise. The hand drier goes off and Dream just keeps his hands steady on George.

George shakes his head, closing his eyes against Dream's hold. "'m just drunk. Don't need to puke, either."

Dream nods, moves down from the balls of his feet to his knees in front of George. The music gets louder and then quiet again as someone opens the bathroom door. He keeps one hand on George's face, who seems to be using it as grounding, and pulls out his phone with his other hand; without that support, George's knee starts bouncing again. He quickly sends off an SOS text to Sapnap and Quackity, who quickly read his messages respectively and say they'll meet him at the car.

When one friend needs to leave, it's understood that the others should leave too. Fun at the expense of someone's pain isn't the way to go.

"Okay, okay. Good. Let's get you up and out, okay? Did you have a jacket?" Dream stands carefully, offers both his hands to George to hold and help him stand. George hands him his phone first, and then takes his hands. He's a bit taller in his boots. George steadies himself, shakes his head at the question and sways against Dream's chest as soon as he's upright. He's really drunk, Jesus. Dream scowls, and the fleeting thought of George's boyfriend passes through his head. "Where's Aaron?"

"Don't know. Don't fucking care."

Dream doesn't know what to make of that, but George is too drunk to explain properly and Dream selfishly doesn't want to get into a conversation about the guy now, so he just nods and unlocks the stall door. Sapnap is leaning against the wall outside of it, Karl standing next to him. They both look worried, and as soon as Dream comes into sight, Sapnap steps forward to help.

George lets him, and soon Sapnap is supporting George under his shoulders. George keeps the fingers of one hand tucked through Dream's pant loops, so even with free hands he can't go far.

"Hey, Gogy. Not feeling too good?" Sapnap gently teases, and George just groans.

Sapnap glances at Dream and mouths, *boyfriend*, like it's a question, and Dream just narrows his eyes at George and jerkily shakes his head. Sapnap scowls, and Dream can see the anger gathering in his friend's face. Sapnap loves like a wildfire, and Dream knows what he's feeling about George's absent man.

It's when they're in the car, Quackity in the passenger seat and George propped up between Karl and Sapnap in the backseat when Dream makes the executive decision. He narrows a look at Sapnap in the review, and nudges his head back at George. Sapnap blinks, and then understanding comes over his face and he whispers to George. No fucking way is Dream dropping George off at home *alone* and potentially with his MIA boyfriend who should have been taking care of George anyways. Dream will drop his trio of passengers off, and then come home with George.

It's not the first time Dream has crashed on George's couch, and he knew it wouldn't be the last.

Dream pulls up beside the dorm building and gets out to help put George in the front seat. Dream leans over him to buckle him in, and George mumbles a string of words that Dream doesn't catch.

He just smiles softly at George, waves goodbye at his friends, and gets back in the car.

He never realized how much of a *pain* George's stairs were until he was pulling a limp body with him.

"George, c'mon," Dream murmurs, arm hooked under his arms and around his waist. George's toe catches on the next stair. "Work with me here."

George just whines, and Dream licks his lips. They get to the first landing, and with precise movements so not to let George fall, Dream crouches and pulls him over his back. He holds George's arms around his neck with one hand, and uses the other to carefully inch George's legs over his hips. Then, Dream stands with aching thighs and readjusts the piggy-back. George jostles and half-heartedly snaps something at Dream, but the blond just hums and makes his way up the next two floors to the apartment door.

He doesn't have to worry about keys; George gave him an extra, and it sits on his keyring like a beacon of safety.

Dream unlocks the door, holding his breath and praying that he doesn't have to see Aaron. He doesn't know what he would do, but there's anger simmering under his cool demeanor and he isn't against punching assholes.

Not assholes, Dream reminds himself, just George's absent boyfriend. Fuck.

Inside the apartment, Aaron is nowhere to be seen. Dream kicks the door closed behind him and walks through George's apartment, mentally apologizing for not taking his boots off. He nudges George's door open with his hip, and flicks the light on with his elbow. George shifts on his back, and Dream turns away from the bed and crouches in front of it. "Down you go, Gogy. Let's get your shoes off, huh?"

George nods dopily as Dream turns around. He unlaces his boots, and one of George's hands comes to rest on his bare shoulder. The fingers rub circles there, and Dream hums to himself as he tugs a boot off. "Other one now."

The process of getting George undressed and redressed for bed is a little more tedious. Dream helps him out of the cropped sweater, slides the choker up and over his head. Obviously on a one-track mind, George shuffles his skirt off right there on the bed and Dream whips around, blushing and giving George the privacy he needs.

George mumbles something about a hoodie, and Dream blindly reaches behind him until his hands land on soft fabric. He offers it, and the clothing is taken from his hand.

"Okay, you can look now." Dream turns around, unable to get rid of the flush on his cheeks. He stops then, because the sweater George is wearing is red, and looks eerily similar—

"Is that mine?"

George is wearing his missing sweatshirt. The red sweatshirt that he thought went missing in the laundry, the one with Dream's name plastered over the lower back and the one that never lost the smell of his cologne. Dream must be seeing things, because he knows he's not drunk. George just stares at him, hands tangled in the loose fabric and bare thighs patterned from his fishnets.

He doesn't say anything. Dream swallows, and turns back to the dresser to look for a pair of George's shorts. He's just found a pair, soft and gray, when George breaks the silence.

"We fought again. Aaron said he didn't like that I had your clothing." Dream's heart thuds, and he resists whipping around to gape at George. George takes his silence as an urge to continue, and Dream can only listen. "Said he didn't like you, didn't like how we text 'nd stuff. I told him he was stupid, an idiot. Said that if I was gonna fool around with other people he—" George snuffles and Dream's heart cracks, "—he would do the same. And then he left at the club. He's not home."

Dream turns then, and offers the shorts to George. He really doesn't know what to say, doesn't know how to use his words to comfort George. He helps him into the shorts, tightens the drawstring around his hips and brushes his fingers over his red sweatshirt. George hiccups, but there's still an absence of tears. Dream doesn't know if he would feel better if George would just *cry*.

"Let me get you something to drink, and then into bed, okay?"

Dream leaves the bedroom and doesn't close the door behind him. He quickly unties his boots and grabs a cup from George's cupboards. The running water is the only thing he can focus on properly, mind absolutely running with different thoughts about George, about Aaron, about this mess he ended up in.

He didn't think Aaron was like that.

Aaron was supposed to be great for George, better than Dream in every way and able to give George what he wants.

If that were the case, Dream wouldn't be here holding a cup to George's mouth, whispering sweet things to him as he drinks with eyes half-closed.

George is basically asleep by the time he finishes the glass, and Dream shuffles his smaller body under the blankets and virtually tucks him in. He brushes a hand over George's hair, smiles at the thought of George complaining in the morning because he still smells like Q4Y's interior and patrons. The smile melts, though, and Dream lets his hand trail lower, across George's cheek.

His eyes are closed, and a soft wheeze escapes him as Dream smooths his thumb under his eyes. They're red and tender, and Dream wonders if in that time he left to get water, George let the tears fall.

He sighs, and goes to stand, but George's hand snaps out. Dream looks down at it, and George whines, "Wh're you going?"

Dream envelops George's hand with his own, gently detangles it from his beltloops. "I'm going to the couch, Georgie. You gotta sleep, baby, okay?"

George shifts, and his face is pressed more into the pillow just as he speaks. Dream doesn't catch a single word and waits for more, wonders if it's about Dream's terrifyingly casual drop of another pet name, but George's arm just slackens in his grasp and Dream knows he's out again. He tucks George's arm back towards his body, and flicks the light off as he leaves the room. The apartment is still empty, and out of a sheer moment of angered petty, Dream deadbolts the door and slides the chain over it.

This might be where Aaron sleeps, but it's George's home first and foremost. That piece of shit can find somewhere else to stay.

Dream walks around the apartment comfortably, tidying up a few things because it isn't terribly late, and grabbing a blanket and pillow for himself from the hall closet. He throws them on the

long sofa, the one he barely fits on, and shoots a quick text off to the Feral Boys group chat that George is safe. Dream feels George's phone buzz in his pocket, and pulls it out to put it down.

Out of pure curiosity, Dream glances at the screen and is surprised to see more texts than he expected on it. Majority are from Aaron, and they're recent enough that Dream wonders why his phone wasn't buzzing up a storm.

His hands shake a little as he slides down on the screen and eyes the lit up crescent moon.

*My phone automatically goes on Do Not Disturb after midnight.*

*Aw, but what if I need to reach you? Memes are important, Georgie.*

*Idiot, I have your contact set to bypass it. I fiddled with the coding, so even if the group chat is muted, your text will come through.*

*So you do care!*

*Obviously.*

Dream's texts come through past DND. Aaron's don't. George likes his privacy, so Dream can't read the preview of the texts.

His fingers carefully tap the screen.

Dream knows George's password.

3404, or E404, since the E key is on the third button when texting was harder. George thought it was clever, and hasn't changed it for over a year.

The phone clicks, and Dream is greeted with a simple background and George's apps. He shouldn't be snooping on his phone. He should put it down, ignore the burning curiosity, and leave it be. Dream taps into the messages app, and is greeted with his own contact, the group chat, and a few other numbers and conversations.

He reads the group chat one to get rid of the notification. The phone doesn't vibrate, but Dream sees the blue number on the side go from five to six. Another text. Dream ignores it and taps into his own conversation with George, almost feeling strange looking at it the other way around. There's a few more texts, mundane things and little images they send back and forth. These are normal. Dream scrolls up, scrolls up again, scrolls—

Wait, what?

He scrolls back down. There, sitting on the screen, is his invitation to Puffy's but only his invitation to Puffy's. There's no meme, no mention of Quackity telling Dream about their fight. There's no sketchy smiley face, the wrong one compared to what George uses. Dream scowls, and pulls out his own phone to compare. He grits his teeth and takes a picture of George's screen, then screenshots his own. He'll ask George about it in the morning, but for now...

He supposes he should be a good *friend*, right? Because friends take care of friends, friends let their friends sketchy boyfriends know that they're home safe. Friends look out for their friends, and Dream has had enough with all the running around.

He taps Aaron's contact, notes the lack of affection in the listing. It's just *aaron*, no heart or nickname. There used to be a heart, Dream remembers from the diner, and besides that, George has

all his friends under nicknames but not his boyfriend?

From: aaron

*where did you go?*

*are you seriously that mad george*

*cmon what the hell*

There's a pause in messages and then they start up again.

From: aaron

*texted karl. why did you leave without me?*

*you seriously went home with dream are you fucking kidding me.*

*im not coming home tonight.*

Dream clenches his jaw. Prick. What happened to the person Dream thought he knew? The giving one, the one that was friendly and didn't have a reason to hate anyone?

From: george

*dream here. george is safe, thought i should let you know.*

Aaron doesn't have his read receipts on and after a quick check, Dream sees that George doesn't either. He watches the screen, but there's no movement to prove that Aaron even read the text, let alone is going to reply to it. Dream turns the phone off, chest hollow and nerves rising. He's just standing in the middle of George's apartment, holding both their phones and discovering his best friend's boyfriend hates him.

Dream pockets his phone and runs a hand over his face. This is a morning issue, and that couch is looking hella fine right now. He plugs George's phone in with a charger he finds on the counter, sets his alarm to go off at ten in the morning, and pulls the baby blue blanket over his torso as he lays down.

He hates himself for feeling mildly hopeful about the strain in George's relationship, and he hates himself more for feeling, what? Dominant? Possessive? *Winning?* Over the fact that of all Aaron's clothing that George has access to, George wears Dream's.

God, he was supposed to be fine with being friends. He hopes George still thinks of him as one when shit hits the fan.



---

Morning comes faster than Dream wants. The living room blinds are open, and he blinks blearily at the blue shades. He groans, pulls himself up to a sitting position, and rubs his eyes before turning his alarm off. He can hear the shower running. Dream looks at the door, and eyes the chain that hasn't budged since last night; it must be George then.

Dream stands, laces his fingers above his head and stretches out the tightness in his back and sides. He's still dressed in his club clothes, but he's sure he left a hoodie here sometime so maybe he can find that. Dream yawns, and pads into the kitchen to look for food.

He's drinking straight out of George's apple juice carton and cracking an egg into a pan with one hand when the brunet comes into view. Dream glances sideways, eyes catching on his wet hair and the oversized black hoodie George is wearing. It comes down to his mid thigh, and Dream wonders if there's anything on underneath.

His gaze snaps back up as George leans against the counter, and Dream offers a smile. The calm before the storm.

"Morning. You hungry?"

George shrugs, and reaches to take the apple juice from his hands. "Kind of. Quit pillaging my juice."

"Free real estate. You want them scrambled?"

"Please."

George sits at the counter, a mirrored position to where Dream was a few weeks ago when he brought him flowers. Speaking of, those daisy's and cornflowers sit on the windowsill in the living room, a little wilted but flourishing enough that George hasn't trashed them yet. Dream makes a mental note to bring him more the next time he visits.

There's tension in the air. They need to talk, and Dream doesn't know if he can face George while he does. He hears George get up and walk to his phone, and Dream *really* needs to talk to him. Words, words, words, and words are fucking hard. He can barely control his tongue around George anyways, let alone get them together enough to tell him about last night.

"I texted Aaron last night. Off your phone." Dream stares down at the eggs, pushes them around with a spatula. "Sorry for going on your phone but I just thought he should know."

George stops moving, and Dream hears the charging cord hit the counter. He swallows nervously, shoulders tense and heart racing. Why isn't this normal? Why is it different now, and not just because of George's boyfriend?

*Because, Dream nags internally, you know that Aaron doesn't like you. You're causing problems.*

George sighs, and sits back down at the counter. "That's alright, thank you for that. Did he say anything else?"

"Uh, not really." Dream clenches his jaw and takes the chance. Here it is. "Didn't know he felt so, uh, *strongly* about me, though."

The eggs sizzle. Dream pokes them.

"Yeah. We fought a while ago over it. You."

*Here it is—*

*Wh—*

*Me?*

"I know. I texted you about it. Didn't know it was about me, though."

"What?"

Dream turns with the hot pan in hand, and gets a bowl out for George. He scrapes the eggs in and sprinkles shredded cheese over the top and nudges it towards him. Dream doesn't look him in the face. "I don't want to make it worse, but check my phone. Scroll up in our conversation."

George frowns, and picks up Dream's phone on the counter and the fork. He types in the blond's password with ease—2323—and taps a few things on it. Dream turns back to the stove, turns the burner off and deposits the hot pan on a cool rack. He's decidedly not hungry, and leans against the counter with his arms crossed as he monitors George.

His hair is damp from the shower and there's dark smudges under his eyes. There's a fading pillow line on his cheek, and George scratches his growing stubble with one hand as he looks through Dream's phone. He must get to the conversation that he doesn't remember having, because George stiffens and squints at the texts.

Dream boldly meets his gaze over the top of the phone.

George breaks it first, and looks back at the phone. He grabs his own, and opens the conversation.

"I kind of remember this," the brunet starts, "Aaron was playing games on my phone because I have Stardew Valley and he doesn't. I was doing homework, and he just said that you wanted to go to Puffy's the next day. I told him to text you back, but—" George cuts himself off. "Typically you *tell* someone when you're on another person's phone. I don't know why..."

Dream's phone is set down on the table. They don't move, even as Dream speaks. "I was with the other three when I texted you. I could tell right away it wasn't you." He chuckles as soon as the words were out, and Dream doesn't know why this feels like a breakup.

This is the exact feeling he got when his girlfriend dumped him, when the guy he had been seeing a long time ago told him he was only fun as a trophy.

Why does it feel like this?

George scoops eggs into his mouth. Dream just stares at the flowers on the windowsill. It's tense. It's never tense with them, and for some stupid reason, there's an undercurrent of anger in both of their words. Dream's is aimed at Aaron and his lies. He doesn't know where George's is aimed. Is he angry for Dream going through his phone? He already said that was alright, though, but it was in reference to Dream texting Aaron...

Dream shifts on his feet. "Sorry about the phone again. Um, do you wanna talk about last night?" George immediately shakes his head. "Ah, okay, that-that's fine. Do you know when Aaron is supposed to get home? Does he typically head out after clubbing?"

The kitchen is silent. Dream can hear George scraping at the bowl and throws a glance over his shoulder just to find an unreadable expression. George looks angry.

*Said that if I was gonna fool around with other people, he would do the same.*

Dream shivers. He's still only wearing a tank top, and the morning chill is getting to him. "I should leave."

George looks up at that. His brown eyes are wide and Dream's brow furrows. "What? Why?"

"Well, we've already established that Aaron doesn't like me—" Dream puts the apple juice back in the fridge, "—so I should probably vacate before he comes home. Any idea where he is?"

George just shrugs. He looks small again, picking at his food and not really eating it. He looks upset. He looks like he wants to cry. Dream's chest hurts again, but it's laced with anger from Aaron ditching his partner and guilt from creating problems in a relationship.

"George?"

The brunet clenches his jaw; Dream can see the tick of the bone. He's annoyed and Dream doesn't know what he's doing wrong.

"Ge—"

"Just go!" George snaps and Dream flinches. George is glaring at him now, eyes narrowed and palms flat on the counter. There's a shine in his eyes and Dream *doesn't know what he's doing wrong*. "Just go, already, okay? I—"

George stops, closes his mouth and swallows. Dream can only stand there, his shout ringing in his ears as he goes over every interaction in the last five minutes. The eggs are going cold in George's bowl and George's phone starts ringing. George doesn't even look at it, just stares Dream down until he feels like he's required to move. What is going on?

Dream clenches his jaw, dips his head and nods at his socked feet. He doesn't want to speak, *can't* because George's anger is so foreign to him, so out of place in the conversation they were having that Dream is reeling from the shock. He walks silently out of the kitchen, feels George's burning gaze on his back as he grabs his phone on the counter. George's stops ringing by the time Dream has a hand on his shoes, and he laces them up. He pretends that the rush in his head is from bending over, not the urge to cry.

The blond turns, reaches for the latches on the door. Dream stops.

"Bye, George."

He opens the door, ready to let the tears fall as soon as he gets into the hallway but it seems like the universe has it out for him, because what do you know, Aaron is standing right outside the door, phone pressed to his ear and wearing the same clothes from last night. Dream's teeth ache from how tightly he's holding his jaw, and he silently regards the asshole of the month as he passes by. Aaron's gaze narrows, and Dream bites his tongue when he purposefully bumps into his shoulder.

Dream glances over his shoulder one last time. George's expression is still hard to read but now he can see the fading anger, the way it drips off him as Aaron approaches like nothing is wrong and Dream hisses through his teeth like the pain in his chest is more than physical. The door slams shut behind Dream, and he tilts his head back towards the ceiling.

"What in the world..." His voice is wobbly, and when Dream gets a hand on the stairwell door, he knows the tears won't last until he's in the car. He wants to believe George is angry at Aaron, wants to hope that whatever was going through George's head wouldn't affect their friendship, but now he's wiping his cheeks in his car and glaring at the passenger seat with empty anger and wishing he never opened that text in the first place.

"Heh," Dream laughs, throat raw and heart cracked. He isn't even in the *wrong* in this situation, George's stupid fucking boyfriend is, so why is Dream getting the heat? He brought George home, he dropped everything at the first sign of danger. He could treat George better. He knows he could.

But George doesn't want him. George is happy without him, and...

*He's happy. That's all I want.*

## Chapter End Notes

now i know what you're thinking

WHAT

or something like that lol

im in the process of writing the second chapter, and as a little explanation, gogy's outburst will make sense soon:)

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

we have art for this chapter!!! a massive thank you to the amazing saturn, PLEASE check out her twitter and art, i cant express how happy this made me:) i'm so grateful for you<3

[george with cats!](#)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The weeks after the fight are rough.

Wilbur comments that Dream looks, and Dream quotes, *like heated up dogshit*. He can't even rebuttal it, because he definitely feels as much like it. Longer shifts at the flower shop become more common and Dream throws himself into his English major, takes on extra-credit that he doesn't need. He changes his seat in his English class much to the chagrin of a few classmates, but Dream is friendly and social enough that they don't care that much. He doesn't want to sit with George anymore, doesn't know why really, but just can't.

He stops coming to movie nights. Sapnap tried to host one at their dorm the first time, but Dream looked him dead in the eyes and told him that if he did it again without telling him, he wasn't coming back. Dream, of course, is a big far liar and after returning to the dorm when their friends left, bawled into Sapnap's shoulder and apologized until Sap was the one threatening to leave. The truth came out that night, and being one of the main connections between Dream and George, Sapnap had told him that George wasn't doing so hot either.

It was a sick kind of glee, to know that George was suffering just as much. Dream is still disgusted in himself over that one.

Dream sighs for the millionth time and trims away another yellow and dying stem. The node length falls, and Dream kicks it towards a pile on the floor. Wilbur dropped his comment and left a few minutes ago, leaving the keys for Dream to clean and lockup. There was a few decent sales today and the only mess was Dream spilling an entire watering can over his shoes, so the mess is pretty minimal as soon as he takes a mop to it.

The song changes overhead, and Dream reaches over to skip it. That stupid Cavetown song plays again.

*"This is erosion,*

*Grind up rocks with your molars."*

Dream hums to it, knowing the lyrics by heart now but not really paying attention. He sways where he stands, and tucks the clippers away into his apron. He heads back to the front of the store.

*"I'll pick a bunch for your room,*

*Green and blue to match your pictures."*

Dream freezes, and glares at his phone. He hasn't heard this song since before his and George's

fight, didn't think anything of it when he added it to his playlists. He reaches for it, ready to change the song again and turns the phone on. There's a text sitting on the screen and he stops.

From: Unknown Number

*It's Aaron. I have some of your things, you should come get them.*

*"You look so good in green,*

*I hope you're well,*

*And you look so good with him,*

*And I'm proud of you still."*

Dream pauses the song. It echoes for a second, and then the flower shop is silent. He reads the text, rereads it, and turns his phone facedown on the counter. Dream stares out of the window; it's barely seven in the evening, and the sun is just starting to creep lower. He needs to bring the tree saplings in and the sign. Dream runs a hand down his face, and in the silence of the shop, he chuckles.

He laughs, because he's pretty sure that if he didn't, he would cry.

Although he knows the time, he checks his watch again. The shop closes at eight, and he was supposed to get snacks before coming back to the dorms. Sapnap had complained about the lack of munchies, and gave Dream a handful of bills before shooing him out of the door. Apparently Karl was coming over. It's barely after seven and Dream has some kind of plans.

He adds stopping by George's apartment to his schedule, and the next hour passes in a blur. Nobody else comes in, and Dream nicks his finger on a clay pot while he moves them inside for the night. He disconnects his phone from the speakers; they were silent since he stopped that song anyways, and triple checks the safe with the register cash and the door before heading towards his car.

The universe must still hate him though, because he plugs his phone in without thinking and the song continues playing.

*"Take care of my shirt,*

*Warm and red,*

*I hope you think of me,*

*Still as your friend."*

Dream rips his phone off the cord and throws it into the passenger seat. He rubs his palms over his face, skin tingling and feeling overstimulated, and then slams his hand once against the steering wheel. It hurts, and Dream snarls at the dash like it was the cause of his problems.

*This is so stupid.*

The drive to George's apartment is short and Dream barely remembers getting there. He pulls into

the parking lot, and immediately sees Aaron sitting on the front step of the building. Dream puts his car in park but doesn't turn it off. There's a box sitting next to George's boyfriend, and Dream gets out of the car.

Aaron looks up from his phone as Dream approaches.

"What's in the box?" Dream says in lieu of a greeting. He glances around, hands in his pockets, and wonders if George is somewhere nearby. It *is* his apartment building.

Aaron stands, and Dream tilts his head. Deep down, he hopes that he's somewhat intimidating but he's still wearing comfortable khakis and white shoes, and a plain t-shirt that is probably flecked with water and dirt. The other licks his lips and reaches down for the box.

"What I told you. Things that belong to you. Ge—we don't need them. So please take them home." Dream takes the box, makes sure not to touch those grimy hands that belong to Aaron (really, he's the one that's grimy, dealing with dirt and plants for the last six hours). The first thing on top is his red sweatshirt, and Dream can't hold back his grin. Why not stir the pot a bit? He's already on his way down, might as well drag one more asshole with him.

He looks back at Aaron, who stares cool and collected back. "Didn't know you had a thing for snatching my clothes, man."

"Dude, what?" Aaron snaps, brow immediately pinching and waving at the box. "You obviously forgot it here, so don't fucking *insinuate* anything. I don't want to fight so just take it and go."

The words sound so much like the ones George snapped at him a few day ago, and Dream huffs a cruel laugh. There's blood in the water, and he's hungry.

"You want me to bring it back when it smells like me again?"

"Listen here, asshole—" Aaron steps towards him and Dream drops the box. His hand lands on Aaron's shoulder, pressing down on the arm that the other was raising to grab his shirt. Dream applies pressure, squeezes his hand just a bit too hard. He drops the smile, and Aaron balks under his grip when he leans down. Aaron might have some height on George, but he's got nothing on Dream.

Dream narrows his eyes. "What was that? *Listen here, asshole?* I'm not the one who left my boyfriend alone and drunk at a bar, huh? I'm not the one who texted by boyfriends' friends without telling him—" Dream tightens his fingers just to see Aaron wince, "—and then deleted the evidence."

The blond stops, and surveys the wide gaze Aaron is giving him. Some of Dream's anger is depleted now, but it's not all gone. His car idles behind him, and Dream lifts his hand. Aaron's shirt is rumpled where it was and the other rubs his shoulder with a glare. Dream's lips tick up in a mock smile, and he bends down to pickup his box of clothes. There's more in here than he thought, and he straightens with one last line in mind. Dream leans back in, and feels the edge of the box dig into his chest.

"George and I are just friends. Even if we weren't, he deserves more than me, and he definitely deserves more than you. Don't forget that."

The adrenaline lasts until Dream is in his car. The hoodie underneath the red sweatshirt is a big, baby blue one that Dream gave George for his birthday last year, a gag gift from Dream's personal collection of hoodies so George *would stop stealing his*. Aaron goes back into the building. He

makes it out of the parking lot, and then he just feels *guilty*.

---

Dream finds it easier than it should be to avoid George. They haven't talked since the fight two weeks ago, and Dream hasn't been around his apartment since he got his clothes from Aaron a few days ago.

At first he wonders why, but Sapnap just tells him that *dude, you both wanted to see each other so you made time*. He was right; they're both working students, and the last time Dream went without seeing George for two weeks, they were texting and calling everyday like they were oceans apart. Now, they're a five minute drive away and Dream's phone has never been drier.

He tells Sapnap about the box incident, and feels a little bit better about the thing with Aaron when he's informed that Aaron doesn't seem as nice anymore. Sapnap still goes with George and him to Puffy's for lunches, but Sap says that it's different now and that there's more tension, more jabs. Sapnap isn't one to quickly change his opinions about people, so Dream knows this wasn't spur of the moment.

Dream wants to reach out to George. He wants to see him and figure out the reason for his anger that morning. He wants to see him, hear him laugh, have him close enough to touch because between friends and losing him, Dream knows exactly what he would choose.

"Sapnap, you send it!" Dream cries out, flinging his arm over his eyes and collapsing on the bed. Sapnap just snorts from his seat at Dream's desk and plays Minecraft on his phone. Dream feels neglected and pouts dramatically like Sapnap would put the phone down. He doesn't expect much when Sap just takes one hand off the game to wave half-heartedly at him.

"Don't be a pussy, dude, just send the text. George wants to talk to you but you're both scared to make the first move."

Dream rolls onto his stomach and aims his pout at his phone. There's a message typed up on the screen, a simple greeting and a *do you want to meet at puffys?* and he still can't get the balls to send it. He's been thinking about it for the last day, since Karl accidentally let drop that George felt *terrible* about everything.

Karl had also let slip that he hasn't seen Aaron in a few days either, and Dream was almost glad for it. He saw enough of that asshole after the entire box of clothes thing.

"But how do you *know*?"

Sapnap groans and snatches the phone out of Dream's hand. He stabs at the screen with a thumb as Dream yelps and swipes it back, and the blond can only watch as the blue line across the top races to the finish line and his phone *swooshes* with the sound of a send text. He gapes, and Sapnap turns back to his game.

Dream hears the sound of a zombie dying.

"There. Now it's sent."

"Nick!"



"Clay! Watch, he's going to answer in five, four, three, tw—"

Dream's phone *swooshes* again, and he pushes his palm against the shit-eating grin on Sapnap's face. "You're such a dick, leave me alone."

"He said yes, didn't he?"

From: gogy

*does lpm work?*

Dream stares at the first sign of life from George in two weeks. "Yeah. Yeah, he did."

"Now we say 'thank you Sapnap'."

Dream ignores him and stands up, shooting off a quick affirmation of the time and realizing he only has twenty minutes to get ready. He glances in the mirror, deems his hair a ruffled and lost cause, and quickly pulls on a gray sweatshirt and socks. He rushes around the room, and Sapnap just plays his stupid little game and drops tips and tricks for his reconciliation.

The blond snags a pair of white sneakers from under his bed and shouts a goodbye to Sapnap, who just lifts a hand and waves at him without looking, and Dream is out the door.

Puffy's isn't far from the university, so Dream doesn't bother with his car and chooses to walk. It's warm outside, but the wind is harsh and cool and Dream is grateful for his sweater. He snags a black windbreaker from his car as he walks by, though, and drapes it over his elbow before shoving his hands in his pockets. The sidewalk is mostly empty, due to the fact it's midday and midweek and most people are in classes. Dream's prof called in sick today, and Sapnap was skipping.

Dream knows that George specifically takes Wednesday's for shooting days, and isn't surprised when fifteen minutes later, he walks into the diner and sees a camera cord dangling over the edge of a booth seat.

He smiles at Niki as he walks past, one of the girls that works at the diner, and bites his lip as he approaches George's table. There's nerves in his gut, and he feels his fidget cube in his pocket.

If Wilbur thought Dream looked rough, he should see George. Dream's chest hurts at the mere sight of him; those dark circles are almost purple now, and his fingernails are bitten down and red around the cuticles as he tangles his fingers on the table. George glances up when Dream reaches the table, and Dream exhales sadly at the bloodshot look in his eyes.

When is the last time George got decent sleep?

Dream sits down, careful and tentative. George is wearing a multicolored sweatshirt and Dream recognizes it as one of Karl's. He offers a small grin and sets his hands on the table, inches away from George's. The side of George's mouth ticks up, but falls back into a soft line soon enough.

They stay quiet for a second, and then Dream opens his mouth.

"I'm—"

"Dre—"

Dream blinks, and George chuckles softly. He leans back in his seat and motions with his fingers. "You go first."

"George," Dream starts, voice soft as to not distract others, "I'm so sorry. About everything. Going through your phone, leaving my stuff at your place, pushing you that morning. I didn't mean to, I just wanted to help you and I might have gone a little far." Dream chuckles awkwardly at the end of his sentence, rationale telling him that that's the reason George was angry and George doesn't like people going through his things.

"Dream, I..." Dream winces and licks his lips. He tries for a smile, closes his eyes so he doesn't have to see him. George clears his throat, and Dream's eyes snap open as warm fingers tangle with his. George is looking at their hands, determination crossing his face. "Dream, you have nothing to apologize for. *I'm* the one who's sorry. I was upset and angry that morning, and you did nothing wrong. In fact, you did everything right and I took it out on you."

George pauses, takes a breath.

"I'm so sorry, Clay. I didn't mean to push you away like that, and I didn't mean to hurt you. You did nothing wrong."

George's hands are shaking; he must be scared too, just like Dream was, of losing the other. Dream smiles, real this time, and gently tightens the hold on George's fingers. He strokes along his knuckles, having missed the feel of him under his hands.

"It's alright, I forgive you. I was just confused about everything, and I know you didn't mean it."

George looks at him, picks him apart in search for any lie or misdealing but Dream is more honest than he's been in a few days. He meets George's eyes and holds it, doesn't let go of their hands and let's George look. Eventually, George sighs and melts into his seat. He looks like the stress of the world has been taken off him.

"I don't deserve it, but thank you."

Dream huffs out a laugh and circles George's knuckles again. "You deserve the world, Georgie. I'm just trying to give it to you."

George laughs, cheeks flushed and red, and the tension drops away. They don't say a lot after that, but Dream feels light and airy as he waves down Niki and she brings them milkshakes a few minutes later. Sapnap texts him halfway through and George snickers as Dream nearly chokes on his drink after reading a sentence that was *clearly* meant for Karl. Jesus, Sap. Dream brushes it off and pokes at George's wrist, suddenly reminded of the latest fashion swap George picked up.

"Why're you wearing Karl's clothes?"

George makes a face and picks at the sleeve. "I didn't want to wear my own clothes, and I couldn't —" George stops and glances up at Dream, who just sips his drink like the pure innocent boy he is. George sighs, and a light flush crosses his cheekbones. "I couldn't find any of yours. I think they might have gotten mixed up in Aaron's laundry and we've been playing the avoidance game."

The last slip of his sentence is bitter, and Dream inhales the gulp of milkshake he just tried to drink. George looks more concerned this time and waits until Dream has stopped hacking up cookie chunks to speak again. "I didn't think it was hard to lose all those sweatshirts, but here I am."

Dream carefully regards George. This reminds him *way* too much of the club morning. "George, I'm going to say this and you need to promise not to be upset because I just got you back. Cool?"

George's brow pinches and he plays with his fingers. "Cool, I guess. What's up?"

Dream opens his phone and lays it on the table. He taps the fifth contact down—still listed as unknown—and spins it around to show George. Dream taps his fingers on his milkshake glass. "Aaron gave me a box with a bunch of my clothes in it. Ones that I thought I gave you. He even gave me back the blue birthday one. I'm guessing he didn't tell you."

Brown eyes snap up to meet his. Dream holds his breath, and George blows out a long breath.

"I didn't know that. Again, I didn't know what he was doing." George nudges Dream's phone back and tips his head back onto the seat. He closes his eyes and Dream notices just how tired he looks. "That's just another thing to add to the growing list of 'we need to talk' that he *refuses* to have. God, it's so frustrating, I feel like I'm dating a brick wall." George reaches up to rub his eyes and Dream's heart hurts for him.

"You wanna talk about it?" George looks like he considers it, but shakes his head.

"I don't know for sure about some things yet, and you two already aren't on good terms. I think I need to talk to him first."

Dream understands. He definitely doesn't want to talk about that asshole anymore than he has to, but luckily the conversation progresses from there and they get into what they've been doing the past two weeks. They both laugh at their avoidance tactics, and George teases Dream about the unrequired extra-credit. Dream asks him how his picture editing is going, and George can only flush.

They finish their drinks and neither is very hungry, so Dream pays—*Dream! I can pay for myself!*—and they head out the door. George shivers as the wind picks up, and Dream offers him his windbreaker that he grabbed.

"Oh, I don't—"

"Just say you're rebuilding a collection of my clothing. Take it, George." Dream holds out the jacket, and George only hesitates for a split second before pulling it around his shoulders. He zips it halfway, and Dream smiles. "There, now you won't be chilly."

George just snorts and rolls his eyes, and they start walking back in the general direction of their homes. They get to a sidewalk where they need to part ways and Dream offers to walk him home, but George tells him that Aaron is home and he doesn't want to start a fight. Dream just nods, and George walks away with one last brush of their hands. Dream watches him go until he can't anymore, and turns back towards the dorms with a small grin on his face and an even tinier feeling of hope.

Still. It's there.

*we talked.*

From: dweamie

*and?*

From: gogy

*we're going to work on it*

*he admitted to some things and so did i*

*i think i made him cry:[*

From: dweamie

*that's good!*

*not the crying but men cry too*

*you okay?*

From: gogy

*to be fair i was almost crying too*

*we talked for almost an hour*

*apologized for things and stuff*

*i yelled a little and i felt bad but*

*i feel like it was deserved*

From: dweamie

*gotcha://*

*youre on good terms again?*

*regularly scheduled gogy hours?*

*no kicked puppy commercial breaks?*

From: gogy

*yes you idiot we're fine now*

*we kissed and made up and now life is flourishing*

*he wants to stay in and watch movies so im not coming to k and q's tonight*

*sorry:|*

From: dweamie

*thats totally okay dude, u stay and cuddle ur bf*

*im happy youre okay:)*

From: gogy

*thanks dream*

*for everything, seriously*

From: dweamie

*/srs*

From: gogy

*youre an idiot*

*<3*

From: dweamie

*<3*

Dream turns his phone off. He wasn't planning on going to Karl and Quackity's either, didn't want to risk seeing Aaron even if the talk went well (and it seems it did). He rolls onto his back, stares at the dark ceiling light and the singular glow in the dark star and exhales a sharp laugh. They made up. Dream should be happy for him, but he isn't.

But...

George is happy, right?

Dream opens his phone.

From: dweamie

*are you happy?*

It takes a second, but the phone vibrates.

From: gogy

*yeah*

*yeah i think i am*

*Good.*

From: dweamie

*good*

*thats all i want:)*

He locks his phone again. The star seems to pity him and the ache in his chest and Dream doesn't stop the hot tear that streaks down into his hairline. He sniffs once, twice, and wipes it away.

"That's all I want..."

---

The lunch hour rush of the shop dies down around 1:30, and Dream collapses on a chair behind the counter. No major holidays around, but for some reason April is anniversary central and the newest blooms are coming into season. He yawns, pulls one of his feet up over his knee and massages his calf. He walked back into a metal shelf a few minutes ago, and he can feel the bruise already forming along with the throb in his forehead.

Dream sighs and eyes the front door, nearly daring another customer to come in. There's an old couple in the shop, looking at the seeds shelf and talking quietly. The mother and her kid are standing by the greenhouse shelf full of early plants. The kid smiles up at the woman, and Dream retrieves four tomato seedlings for her.

His phone is playing music on the speakers. Hozier croons through the shop, singing of thinly veiled sex and pining. He brushes his hands off from damp soil as the mother and child exit the shop, and the elderly lady leans down to look at the flower seeds. Dream rubs his calf and

rearranges a few things on his register. He taps his fingers against the smooth countertop, and stifles a yawn that leaves his eyes watering.

He isn't bored, per say, but he's so, so tired. A nap would be the best thing right now.

Dream glances at his watch; he gets off in fifteen. He's gonna say hi to Wilbur, who's coming in at two, drive straight to the nearest Starbucks and get himself peach tea, and then pass out in his bed fully clothed and sleep for two hours. It sounds like heaven, and Dream watches the seconds tick by.

The couple ends up buying a few packs of seeds, and Dream waves at them as the store empties. He hears the door open for them and he drops his head on the counter. Five minutes.

"Sleeping on the job? Wilbur wouldn't approve."

Dream yelps and jerks up, panicking until he places the voice. It's George, standing by the slowly closing door and holding a drink's tray. He's wearing a white t-shirt and Dream's windbreaker; Dream can see the couple walking past the windows as George approaches, and he smiles at him.

"Sleeping? Me? Never." George sets the drinks down and Dream reaches for his peach tea, all earlier exhaustion forgotten in the presence of George. The brunet walks around the counter, familiar and easy, and drags a stool over to sit beside Dream. His own matcha latte is sitting in the tray still, and Dream lifts it out before throwing the cardboard away. George settles, and places a paper bag on the table where the tray was. "What's the visit for? I get off in literally a few minutes."

George reaches for his drink and lifts a brow at Dream. "What, I can't come in and say hi? Wilbur isn't even here, you have plenty of time."

Dream sips the tea and sighs contentedly at the flavor. That nap is going to be so good later. "Fair enough. What are you doing out?"

"Photos," George grumbles, and Dream doesn't know how he missed the big bag on George's hip, "I had a draw going a while ago and this couple won it, they were allowed to choose locations and stuff. A pain, really, and I'm never doing it again. Aaron was supposed to come with me and help, but he said he had an emergency meeting of some sort today."

Dream hums and reaches for the bag, guiding it over George's head and off his shoulder. George lets him. "Do you think some turned out good?"

"Of course, who do you think I am?"

They share a look, and then snicker. Dream takes another gulp of his drink and pokes at the bag. "What's in here?"

"Banana bread. Bought it for you, because I know you probably haven't eaten today and you weren't going to until later."

Dream scowls jokingly and opens the bag, gratefulness playing in his voice when he speaks. "Oh yeah? How do you know that?"

George sips his green drink and taps his toes together on the stool. Dream thinks he looks good in his jacket and feels a stab of triumph that George is wearing it even post-talk with Aaron. George looks so pretty, with wind-flushed cheeks and red knuckles. Dream can see a line in the side of his neck from his camera strap and resist the urge to rub his fingers over it. He nearly misses George's

next words. "What?"

"I said, so you weren't going to take a nap after your shift? You do this every time you work seven to one, and now one-thirty."

Dream grumbles under his breath and chooses not to answer; he rips a piece of the banana bread off and chews it, finding it somewhat fresh and good. George just chuckles softly at his lack of response and steals a piece. Dream lets him. He feels tired again, yet not the same exhaustion he felt earlier; his headache is still somewhat there, and he just feels heavy and warm.

He wants to be held and pressed into, hands over his back and chest and to feel *safe* in somebody's arms.

Dream swallows the bread, it having turned thick in his mouth and settling like a rock in his stomach. George, blind to his inner turmoil, just sips his drink and skips the next song on Dream's phone.

Dream wants to be held by George, wants to be safe in *his* arms. Dream looks at his hands, his fingers wrapped around the plastic cup and wishes he could feel them intertwined with his own, wants to know what they would feel like petting through his hair. It hurts, having him so close but so unavailable.

"Are you actually going home after this?" George asks, snapping Dream out of his daze. He recovers quick and holds his own drink.

"Was planning on it. Why, you wanna take a nap with me?" Dream is teasing, but George shrugs and checks the time on his phone. The blond can only stare as George opens up his messages, sends something off, and then looks at Dream and nods. "Wait, for real?"

Brown eyes roll. "I'm tired and the apartment is empty. Plus, you live in the same building as Karl and Quackity. Less of a walk."

Dream blinks, forces himself to swallow again. George wants to take a nap with him. Together. With Dream. "I mean, y-yeah, sure if you want. We probably have some of your clothes there too, if you—"

The door opens and Dream's head snaps towards it, but it's just Wilbur, smoothly waltzing in a whopping fifteen minutes late and not sorry about it in the slightest. The owner grins when he sees George, and Dream is already moving to stand up.

"Dream and George! Fancy seeing you here this fine afternoon," Wilbur lets them out from behind the counter and then takes Dream's spot. He settles in comfortably and pulls out a silver laptop like he isn't late at his own business. Luckily, he doesn't do it often and always makes sure Dream gets his little bit of overtime. He doesn't mind it that much, and the extra money is nice.

Dream rolls his eyes and grabs George's camera out of the way. "Hi Wilbur, bye Wilbur. Don't be late next time, asshole."

Wilbur scoffs with a smile and waggles his finger. "Time doesn't exist to me. Go home, man, you still look like shit."

George teases him about the 'still' the entire drive home, eats the last of the banana bread he brought Dream as they get to the dorm rooms, and yawns wide enough to crack his face when Dream unlocks the door. He sets George's camera case down on the table, and they toe off their shoes. Sapnap isn't home, probably in classes, and Dream is just ready to *sleep*.



"I'm literally about to pass out, so I'm going to take a nap. I'll take Sap's bed—"

George huffs and walks by Dream to his room. Dream follows, numb and tired. George pushes the messy covers back and sheds the windbreaker, leaving him in a thin shirt and his joggers. George looks at a frozen Dream and pats the bed before laying down. "C'mon, you know we both fit in one and you don't know when that idiot last washed his sheets. Just lay down and sleep, Wilbur wasn't kidding." George's sentence could be interpreted as mean, but Dream sees the way his brows pinch and his brown eyes take stock of Dream. He's sure he looks as dead as he feels.

He just hopes he doesn't look as *excited* as he feels.

"Uh, a-alright. Move over." Dream empties his pockets of his phone and keys before walking over and sitting down. His room is kind of cold, but Dream runs hot. George doesn't, and Dream can see the goosebumps forming. "You cold?"

George just shrugs, not quite sitting up between Dream and the wall but also not in a nap-ready position. "I guess. Why's your room so cold?"

"Maybe the thermostats messed," Dream mutters, and leans over the edge of the bed to snag the hoodie he had laying on his desk chair. He gives it to George and has a love-hate war with the butterflies in his chest when the brunet's face lights up. George nearly smacks him in the nose with a stray elbow, but he's soon covered in Dream's trademark green and he never wants to see him without it again. Dream tugs at the sleeve, and hopes the lower light of his room hides the way his cheeks flush when they settle close. "You look good in green."

"I can't even see it, but I'm not sure I believe you." Dream laughs softly, eyelids heavy now that he's in his bed. George is a hot line of warmth against his arm as he plays on his phone, and Dream sighs deeply as he wriggles around to find the best position. George just moves with him, accommodating his shifting like it's second nature. Maybe it is, they've napped together before.

But before, George didn't have a boyfriend.

"Y-you're okay with this, right?" Dream blurts and curses internally when George swings a confused look his way, "I just mean, like, this won't cause problems with you and Aaron?"

George looks at him a moment longer, and smiles softly. Dream feels his blinking getting slower, and the gentle hand George threads into his hair doesn't help.

"It's fine, Dream, just go to sleep. I'll be here when you wake up."

Dream grumbles and smashes his face into the pillows. He's on his side facing George and George is propped between him and the wall and the line of pillows Dream likes to collect and hoard. He's in Dream's bed, wearing Dream's hoodie, and playing with Dream's hair. He's dead, isn't he? This is heaven.

There's a snort that faintly registers above his head in his sleepy daze. Those fingers never stop moving, and Dream thinks he hears words, and then the faint click of a phone locking. He thinks, but the warmth against him shifts and increases, and then he lets himself slip completely.

Yeah, this is heaven.

---

From: snapmaps

*(IMG\_589)*

*u 2 look cozy*

*no invite? :(*

From: pissbaby

*i fucking hate you.*

---

Karl is the one to see it and spread it. It's simple, nothing that Dream thinks greatly of in the preview text; it's just a picture, and he's pretty sure Karl and Sapnap went back to Q4Y for drinks (at first, he thinks it's that stupid one Sapnap got of him and George wrapped around each other on his bed a few days ago). Then, he thinks that maybe it's just a selfie because Karl does like to take multitudes.

Dream is alone in the dorm room, watching Netflix on his computer and ignoring his classwork. He just got off the phone with George, who was editing pictures for that couple because he'd procrastinated too long and was stressing over it, all while complaining that Aaron's friends were being sketchy and he was worried about Aaron. It made for one stressed Gogy, and Dream had half a mind to drive over and check on him. Dream slides open the text.

He nearly drops his phone.

It's Aaron, clear under the neon lights of the club, with his arms wrapped around a girl in a pink skirt and set in a heady liplock. Dream stares at it, taps the screen and realizes it's a Live image and morbid curiosity gets the better of him. He presses the screen and for a few seconds, Ariana Grande plays through his speakers.

Aaron is dancing, eyes closed and fully engulfed with the girl, and just before the scene cuts off, he hears Sapnap's, "*What the fuck?*" loud and clear. Yeah. What the *fuck*.

His first thought is to tell George.

His second thought is how to tell George.

The phone buzzes and Karl is thinking the exact same thing.

From: honke

*what do we DO*

*we left bc we didnt want him to c us*

*omw home now see u soon*

From: hardened clay

*gotcha, see you soon*

Dream sits back on his bed. He wracks his brain, tries to find clues of *anything* that could have meant Aaron was fucking cheating. George isn't poly, wasn't able to give his love to more than one person at a time and Dream *knows* about the jealousy issues that his bestfriend sometimes has. Aaron is cheating. Aaron is cheating on George.

The blond sits up, hands trembling around his phone.

*His meeting is running late.*

*He had an emergency meeting but he said he would meet us later.*

*I thought it was my phone going off at midnight, but apparently one of his friends got in an accident. I hope they're okay...*

*He said he felt sick, didn't want to infect everyone at movie night.*

*Dream, none of them are answering me! What if he's drunk or hurt o-or—ugh!*

*Said that if I was gonna fool around with other people, he would do the same.*

Dream stares at his black screen, and scoffs to himself lightly. Nothing about this is *light*, but he doesn't know what to do. There was a sign right there, right from the beginning. Nobody just says that, and Aaron accused George of cheating long before it became an issue.

He stands up, paces because now he has nervous energy and Sapnap and Karl should be back soon. Now cheating is an issue. What the fuck, what the fuck?!

Dream spends enough time pacing that Sapnap and Karl come back before he has a solution. There's glitter on Karl's cheekbones and dusting Sapnap's chin, but one sports a worried expression and the other is murderous. Sapnap doesn't take his shoes off and joins Dream in his pacing.

"I'm literally going to beat his ass, what the fuck is that?!" Sapnap snarls, and Karl leans against the wall, staring softly at his phone. Dream just shakes his head and sits down on his bed again, and watches his bestfriend. "What a piece of shit, I cannot believe—"

"What are we going to tell him?" Karl says, voice already defeated, "He cares about this guy and this is going to break his heart."

They fall silent, and Dream sighs.

"I'll go to his apartment. I was thinking about visiting him anyways and he's not asleep yet. I can tell him."

Dream stands, reaches for his gray hoodie, and Sapnap grabs his elbow. The blond stops and matches the even stare Sap gives him. "You going by yourself?"

He hesitates, and nods minutely. "George is better to deal with one-on-one, I think. The only issue is him believing me. Aaron already isn't a fan of me and I don't want him to think I'm, like, manipulating him." Dream winces and feels his posture wilt, and collapses back down. Sapnap's hand falls off his arm. "Maybe it wouldn't be good if I told him, but he needs to know. How could we have missed this...?"

"I can tell him. I'm the neutral party here when it comes to Aaron, and love you to pieces, Sap, but if Aaron is home, I don't think you would get a word out before you decked him," Karl explains, wrapping an arm around Sapnap's waist as the other pouts and agrees with him. Karl inhales deeply and taps a few things on his phone before kissing Sapnap on the cheek and heading towards the bathroom. "I'm going to clean up and then I'll go over there. We didn't drink anything, but do you mind driving me, Dream?"

Dream shakes his head and Karl slips out of the room. The bathroom fan turns on with the light, and Sapnap falls on the bed next to Dream. They don't speak and Dream doesn't think he could, not with the ache in his chest that he knows is only going to get worse in the next hour. He hurts for George, hurts because he doesn't know how to help him through this. George doesn't even know, and is sitting at home in front of his dual monitors scared that his boyfriend is hurt somewhere. In reality, his boyfriend is *cheating* on him.

Dream really wishes it was the former. God, George...

Karl borrows one of Sapnap's sweaters and washes the glitter off his face. Dream tugs his white sneakers on, and Sapnap comes along for moral support. They shoot Quackity a quick text, and the shorter meets them at Dream's car, face grim and arms crossed. They don't play music, and in the front seat, Dream can see the way Karl's leg bounces nervously. As much as they all hate this, George needs to know.

The car is put into park. Karl stares up at the building, the third floor where George's apartment is located. Karl said he already sent George a text he was dropping by, and George had only sent a little smiley face back.

Dream unlocks the doors and watches Karl get out, and his head *thunks* back against the headrest with a sigh. Even in the dark parking lot, Dream can see that there's a distinct absence of a silver Malibu.

Quackity and Sap sit in the back, silent as mice, and Dream doesn't know how long he's supposed to wait.

"Do you think Karl will stay the night?" Dream murmurs, and sees the way Sapnap shrugs.

"Dunno. I guess it depends how George reacts."

Dream nods, and the car is quiet once again.

This fucking *sucks*.

They don't keep track of how much time passes. Dream drives around for a little, takes Sapnap and Quackity to a 7-11 for snacks and drinks. Sapnap grabs a Monster for Karl in case the other comes back, and they return to the parking lot. Dream is skipping through songs on his phone when Sapnap's phone rings, and he picks it up so fast the first note barely has time to finish playing.

"Karl?"

Dream and Quackity share a look and hold their breath as Sapnap listens. Dream can vaguely hear

words on the other end, but nothing to make sentences out of.

"Okay... okay. Are you staying the night...? He's—do you want us to come up?" Dream watches Sapnap's brows scrunch, and then he glances at Dream. "I can send up him. Ask George if he wants—yeah, I kind of expected that. See you soon, baby."

The phone call ends. Sapnap looks sad, and Dream licks his lips.

"Go up and see your boy, Dream. We can walk home, just make sure he's okay."

Dream frowns, torn between friends and found family. "Are you sure? I can—" Sapnap reaches forward to shut the car off and end the little argument, and Dream sighs. "Alright. Text me when you guys get home, okay? No detours."

"Sir, yes sir," Quackity salutes, and the three of them clamber out of the car. Dream is thankful for his hoodie now because with the chill of the night air and his nerves, he's a shivering mess. Dream looks at the door to the building, unsure until Quackity socks him—gently—in the arm. "Go up and meet Karl halfway. George needs you."

*George needs you.*

True to his friends word, Dream opens George's door with a gentle knock and call of his name, and Karl pulls it open wider. He looks sad, with messy hair and downturned lips. Karl murmurs that George is in the bedroom and pats him on the back before slipping down the hallway. Dream inhales deeply, and locks the door behind him with a heavy heart. George needs him, Dream specifically, after the information was dropped about his boyfriend.

Hopefully, Dream internally scowls, his soon to be ex-boyfriend.

Dream slips his shoes off at the doorway and makes his way down the hall. The light in the bathroom is on, and George's door is cracked open. That light is off, save for the mushroom string lights on his wall and the lamp beside his bed. Dream's heart hurts, and he raps his knuckles on the door; the lump on the bed twitches, and Dream steps into the room while eyeing the glowing phone on the bedside. "George?"

The lump rolls partly over, and a pale hand reaches out for him. Dream takes it, threads his fingers through George's and sits on the bed, moving the phone to the side table and glancing at the conversation. He only catches a *dont bother coming back* and then his attention is fully on George. The hand tugs, and Dream shuffles in closer. The bedsprings squeak, but they don't hide the snuffle that escapes the George-lump and Dream sighs. He keeps holding George's hand, and eyes the quarter of his face he can see. His cheekbones are red and Dream brushes a soft hand through the baby hairs above George's ear, trying for soothing as George's shoulders tremble. Dream hears a muffled sob, and then—

George hiccups and Dream's heart cracks.

There's a wild shuffle of blankets and bodies, and soon Dream is under the covers and George's face is pressed into his chest, his head held there by Dream's hand and small fingers clutching the front of Dream's hoodie. George's back shudders on a sob, and Dream curls over him like he could protect him. In reality, the attack is coming from inside, from George's heart, and Dream can only hold him so he doesn't shatter.

"Cl—" George starts, and Dream just soothes him.

"I'm here, George, I got you." George inhales a shaky breath at that, a pause between his cries, and

Dream grits his teeth against those of his own as the breath comes out as a muted wail. "I got you..."

George nods against his chest, trembling and small and Dream can only hold him steady. Dream holds him through half muttered sentences, bitter ones and angry ones, and holds him through quickened breaths and hiccups. He runs fingers through George's hair, brushes off the brunet's worries when George mentions his soaked hoodie only to restart a round of tears, and presses his cheek into George's head when his breaths even out. His phone buzzes in his pocket, and Dream only detaches one hand to make sure it's Sapnap and the crew getting back safe.

Dream doesn't know when he starts humming, but he wraps his arm back around George and pulls him close. George sniffs and repositions his head out of the wet patch, and Dream fights back a sad noise.

"Here, lemme take it off, sweetheart, give me a second." Dream carefully untangles himself, and George just nods against the pillow. Dream gets a good look at him, and sees the puffy eyes, the red nose, the flushed cheeks. George's lips are bitten raw, and his throat clicks as he swallows. Dream shucks the hoodie off and lays back down, reaching for George and tugging him close. Dream shuts off the light and recalls if he locked the door, and then settles on his back. George moves with him, as fluid as he did when they napped together before. "Can I get you anything? Something to drink?"

George shakes his head and lays it on Dream's chest. He's too busy with trying to make George feel better than to worry about his stupid infatuation, so Dream just hums his ascent and lays a hand back on George's head. A pale hand curls on Dream's chest and tangles into his thin shirt, wrinkled from being under the hoodie, and Dream strains his ears to hear George's croak.

"Can you keep humming? It's quiet in here..."

"Of course I can."

George falls asleep on Dream's chest, cheek pillowed on his shoulder and fingers twitching as Dream hums every soft tune that comes to mind. He stays that way during the night, and even as Dream falls into a pitiful sleep, he doesn't once stray his hands from the heartbroken boy in bed with him.

Well, if we're talking heartbroken boys, you can easily count two.

---

George takes three days.

Dream stays with him through two of them, and since it's the weekend, neither have class or real commitments. George sends out a professional email stating that there is family business that came up, and Dream plans works at the flower shop on Sunday to give him a little space. He makes him breakfast Saturday morning, gives him a little cloth wrapped baggie with ice for his swollen eyes. George sits at the counter and watches Dream cook. The blond pretends he doesn't notice the forlorn stare George is giving the pictures on his walls.

Saturday is a lazy day for both of them; the rest of the Feral Boys drop by with various comfort items, like McDonalds and videogames, and even for a not-so touchy person, George gets in rounds of affection and cuddles from anyone available. They don't stay late, but George falls asleep

on the couch leaning against Sapnap's shoulder and Karl's head on his lap. Dream carries him to bed that night, and does his dishes before passing out on the couch.

On Sunday, George wakes Dream up early with the typically Apple phone alarm. Dream falls off the couch, and even if it's at the expense of his rug-burned nose, he grins widely at George's laugh.

They clear out a few things that George doesn't need, and when Dream motions at a few things that are decidedly *not George's*, the brunet looks away and tells Dream a simple *I'll take care of it tomorrow*.

Dream believes him, and they wash all his laundry and bedsheets. Dream leaves for work at one-thirty with George's credit card and a grocery list. When he comes back just after ten-thirty at night, George is snoozing lightly on the couch and Dream slips the unused card back into the brunet's wallet and replaces the dried cornflowers with fresh dandelions. Dream quietly puts his groceries away and washes his hands and fingernails of potting soil, and carries George to bed for the second night in a row.

This time, George blinks away tears when Dream tucks him in, and Dream has to answer a whispered *what did I do wrong* with a *it was never your fault, sweetheart*.

By the time the third day rolls around, Dream leaves George's apartment with a smile and a promise that George will call if he needs him. George basically pushes him out of the door, laughs at Dream's dramatics, and Dream makes sure to ruffle his hair extra good before it shuts. He walks down to the parking lot with a grin and a light feeling in his chest. Dream gets into his car, and swings by Starbucks before he heads back to his dorm.

Dream opens the door and Sapnap is immediately on him.

"So? Is he alright? What did he say?" Dream snorts and pushes Sapnap's face away with his free hand, making sure to rub condensation from his drink all over his cheek.

"He seemed fine when I left. I think he's purging all *his* stuff now. Not sure what he's going to do about the apartment, though." Dream sets the overnight bag that Sapnap brought him on Saturday down and sips his drink. He frowns, thinking harder and more clear now that he isn't around the giddy cloud that is George. "Aaron's name wasn't on the lease, so George owns the place. I hope that the asshole just accepts it and goes."

Sapnap nods absently and sits down at the table, laptop open to some school project. "He didn't come back all weekend?"

"I think George texted him the first night to not show his face. Even if he didn't, I wouldn't have let him in."

"Ooh, protective, aren't we?"

Dream snorts and sets his drink down before looking through the mini-fridge they snuck in. "Shut up, Sap, you were ready to beat his ass a few days ago."

"Whatever. Still would."

Dream catches up on his homework—and that stupid extra-credit assignment—that he missed over the weekend, and tidies up his room that Sapnap pillaged while he was gone. He feels a little empty now, having gotten used to being around George in the last two days that it's weird to not be around him now. He's still worried, of course, because George didn't tell him anything about what

was going on with Aaron other than the peek at the texts Dream got, and he's not sure they've properly broken up yet.

Dream nearly drops a book. What if George doesn't want to break up with him?

No, no way. Dream shakes his head like he can physically dispel the thoughts. He wouldn't do that to himself. It wouldn't be healthy. He trusts George. He knows that George will make good decisions. George will.

The blond sighs and goes back to fixing his stack of literature books. He wants to help more, but offering only goes so far and he doesn't want to overwhelm George. He's already pretty private and knows he has to talk to Aaron, so Dream can just wait and see.

He trusts him. That's the best thing he can do, and Dream will always support him.

---

From: gogy

*will u be able to come over in like thirty mins*

*i m giving him his stuff today and i just need u there*

From: dweamie

*thirty mins only or u want me there now*

From: gogy

*whenever youre free*

From: dweamie

*omw*

*we can get food after, yeah?*

From: gogy

*ok:]*

"I'm heading out! Might be punching assholes today, might not. You never know," Dream calls out to Sapnap before he snatches his keys off the table and heads to the door. Sapnap was napping, and Karl came over to visit. Dream doesn't expect an answer, but Karl calls back a muffled affirmative



and Dream is out the door.

He's jittery the entire drive, nervous over seeing George's (ex?) boyfriend for the first time in a week and just the factor of seeing George. He's been doing better the last few days, has gone back to doing his pictures and being *an active member of the community* as Sapnap put it.

George had told him to get bent and Dream could only laugh.

Dream makes it to the apartment in five minutes flat, and breathes out a sigh of relief when he notes the absence of a certain silver car. George is expecting him, so Dream climbs the stairs and reaches the door in record time. He's a little out of breath from his trek, but the smile George gives him when he opens the door has him gasping.

"That was fast. Didn't break the law, did you?" George walks away from the door and Dream watches his green, green, green covered back. There's three boxes piled up by the door, and Dream looks at the picture of George and Aaron in the top one. George is wearing the same green hoodie as he was in the picture, and Dream can't bite down his grin.

"Didn't get caught, did I?" Dream walks further in, notes the empty picture frames and spaces on the walls. He realizes that the apartment doesn't even feel empty, not with all the stuff by the door and the way George floats around comfortably in his home; it just feels like another typical cleaning day. "When is he supposed to get here?"

George hums and opens the fridge. He pulls out an apple and sits at the counter while Dream pokes around. "Fifteen minutes-ish. It's the first time I've texted him since last Friday."

Dream nods and moves into the kitchen. George crunches into the apple and the radio plays some soft love song.

They share a look, and Dream pushes.

"Are you still together?"

George looks away briefly, but returns with a determined look that knocks Dream's air out all over again. "I didn't explicitly tell him, but this is the end. I'll make sure he knows when he shows up." George swallows his apple piece and turns it in his hand. Dream watches as the sleeve of the hoodie slides down his wrist. "He's supposed to text me when he gets here and then come up. He doesn't know you're here."

Dream breathes in. "He knows what my car looks like."

George doesn't waver. "Then he knows that he's at a disadvantage. I'm not changing my mind."

The blond exhales, and the radio fills the silence again. Dream watches George, uncaring of how openly he's staring as the indirect lighting makes him glow. George just taps the screen of his phone, flat on the counter and open and soft.

"Is there anything else I can help you get out of?" Dream asks quietly, and George looks up.

"Physically or mentally?"

"Both. Either."

George stares for a second, and then purses his lips. He seems to be collecting his thoughts, and Dream lets him.

"We weren't together for that long. Maybe two months? I feel like I should still be more affected, I mean, he ch—" George scowls and pokes at the counter, "He cheated on me and that hurts, but I had my cry over it and now I feel better. I don't know how breakups go, but is that normal? I mean..."

Dream huffs softly and shrugs. "You feel how you feel. Obviously you cared about him, and I hate that he hurt you like that, but I think it's fine that you aren't still torn up over it. Dwelling on it only makes it worse, and now you're trying to make yourself better. That's all you can do."

The brunet sighs, and bites into his apple again. He glances up at Dream. "I don't think he would, but if he tries anything—"

"I'll stop him, George. I won't let him hurt you again. I promise." Dream's tone is soft but stern, leaving no room for hesitation or doubt. George smiles then, sends Dream's heart for a ride around the racetrack and chuckles.

"I knew that. That's why I wanted you here."

Dream has to make himself laugh at that, or else he'd melt into a pile of love. "What, and not Sap? He was ready to deck the dude a few days ago. Still is."

"And you wouldn't?" George's phone buzzes, and he looks down at it before leveling Dream with a neutral stare. "He's downstairs. I'll tell him to come up now and I can get that shit out of my house."

The blond chuckles easily this time, and nods at his friend. George sends a text, and almost immediately after there's a knock at the door. George scowls, and gets up to go answer it. "Thought I told him to wait to come up, stubborn asshole..."

George stops at the door, and Dream follows behind him. He watches George's green back rise on an inhale and fall just as he unlatches the deadbolt and opens it. Dream's nerves spike, and he leans against the wall as the hinges swing open. George shifts on his feet, and Dream meets Aaron's gaze over a green shoulder.

The eyes fall just as quickly. "George," Aaron murmurs, and George crosses his arms.

"I want you to take your stuff and leave, please. I don't want it here anymore."

"George, I—"

"Take it, and go." George's voice leaves no room for argument, and Aaron looks to be fumbling with his words. The dude looks rough, Dream decides, with unkempt hair and some decent scruff, but he has no sympathy for cheaters. George doesn't either, and slides the tower of boxes over. "Put that in the hallway and take it with you. We're done, everything between us is over, and I want you to leave."

Aaron grimaces, and it's when he looks like he's about to reach for George that Dream straightens. He crosses his arms, stares down the smaller man in the doorway until that hand retracts. The grimace turns to a glare, and Aaron picks up the first box. He doesn't leave, though, and Dream doesn't like the expression that comes over his face.

*There's blood in the water, and he's hungry.*

"You think you're so high and mighty, huh?" Aaron spits, words venomous and harsh and Dream sees George recoil the tiniest bit, "You're just a manipulative bastard. I didn't do anything that wasn't done to me already, asshole."

Dream feels his lip curl in a snarl, and grinds his teeth to try and rein it back. He can't read George's expression, but from Aaron's sick glee, it must not be nice.

"What did you say to me that day? 'George and I are just friends'? Bullshit, I see the way you look at him," Aaron keeps going, and Dream feels his temper rising. "Hope you enjoy that ass while it lasts, because—"

*Aaaand* that's the last straw.

Dream lays a gentle hand on George's shoulder to move him out of the way, and then puts a not so gentle one on Aaron's before crashing his knuckles into his face.

Aaron stumbles back, hand flying to his cheek as he hits the wall on the other side of the hallway, the box in his hands exploding against the floor in memory filled shrapnel. He wheezes, sick words stopping and now staring wide-eyed at Dream, who just absently rubs his hand through his adrenaline rush and glares at him.

"Take your shit and go. If I see you here again, you'll be leaving with half your teeth and twice as many bruises," Dream growls, and takes satisfaction in the way Aaron pales at the threat; Dream realizes his nose is bleeding. George, who was frozen behind him, suddenly pushes the boxes out of the doorframe and into the hallway. Dream doesn't say anything more, just takes one last look at the asshole in the hallway before stepping back inside and closing the door.

It's very still for a moment, and then Dream winces and looks at his fingers. Nothing is bleeding, but there's a distinct throb that comes with the very out of practice act of decking someone. "Jesus, next time I'm leaving the punching to Nick."

Shaky fingers wrap around his wrist, and Dream looks at George. He's a little pale, a little shaken up, and Dream feels guilty.

"Sorry about that, Georgie. I couldn't stand to hear him talk about you like that."

George shakes his head and Dream hears him swallow before he's being led to the kitchen. George keeps a gentle hold on his wrist as he retrieves an icepack, and then sits Dream down at the counter before pressing it to his hand. Dream hisses at the pressure, and something outside the door thumps. They ignore it. George just keeps his head down and strokes a finger over Dream's thumb, the only finger not covered by cold.

"You did nothing wrong. I was right, by asking you to come over. I didn't realize he was like this... like that."

George is still shaking, Dream realizes, and uses his left arm to wrap around his thin shoulders. George scoots his chair closer, melts into Dream's shoulder and keeps the cold on his hand. Dream's heart is in his throat, half living off the contact and half living off his adrenaline high. Dream sighs, and lays his cheek on George's head.

"I'm just glad I was here."

George chuckles, and Dream's head bounces against his hair. "You're always there when I need you. Maybe you have a super hero complex or something."

They both laugh, and George takes the ice off to poke at Dream's knuckles. Two are slightly bruising already, probably because Dream clipped the asshole in the teeth, and there's a scrape across the knuckle on his pinky. George frowns at it, and instructs Dream to *stay put* like he's dying and not suffering from severe Can't-Punch-Properly-itis. Dream just nods and watches him go,

somehow still infatuated with the way George looks in green. *His green.*

George returns with Hello Kitty Band-aids—*plasters, Dream, they're plasters*—and a nurse's attitude. Carefully, the scrape is cleaned and bandaged, and Dream waves it in front of his face to show him that *I'm fine, George, I've gotten worse from rose bushes.*

"Still!" George catches his hand and smooths his fingers across the back of it, tracing veins and the thick stock of his wrist. Dream studies their hands, and blinks at the stark difference between them.

"George, your hands are tiny."

"Shut up." George pulls Dream's hand closer, spreads his fingers and studies the calloused fingertips. Dream lets him. "You're just big."

Dream can only huff his laugh.

Then, just when he thought his heart was done its marathon, George lifts his hand and brushes his mouth over the bruises on Dream's knuckles. Dream's mouth falls open, and George closes his eyes. There's a flush high on his cheeks and Dream swears he can feel the other's pulse in his palm, but it can't be worse than his when George plants a soft but firm kiss over the bandage on Dream's hand. Dream holds back the hitched breath, holds back the content sigh, and settles for smiling softly at the brunet.

"What was that for?"

George just straightens with a sly look and lets go of his hand. "Just a thank you. Are you still in the mood to get food, or are you too gravely injured?"

"Puffy's?"

"Puffy's."

"Let me make sure that asshole's car is gone first, okay?"

George smiles at him and Dream sees the way he tucks himself into his hoodie. He looks happy, Dream thinks, and smiles despite himself.

"Okay. Thank you, Clay."

"Of course, George."

---

George is... acting weird, if you ask Dream. It's not so much that it's a bother, but Dream catches on within the second day and from then on, he can't stop noticing it.

George is more cuddly. More touchy. It's like he's becoming a Karl 2.0 because when they're together, George is poking Dream, hanging off his arm or shoulder or leaning into his side. Dream doesn't mind, in fact, he probably encourages it with the way he wraps his arms around George at any given time now that George accepts it. He doesn't know if the others really catch it, but Sapnap mentions that they're a lot closer these last days.

The brunet is also very against being alone. Dream doesn't know if it's withdrawal from having someone in his house all the time, but George is at Dream and Sap's dorm more often than he is home now. They spend the next movie night at George's, though, and even though it isn't terribly late the other insists that everyone stay for a sleepover. George has enough clothes to go around, and what he doesn't have of his own, he has of Dream's. George has definitely rebuilt his Dream (hah) closet since the Aaron Incident two weeks ago.

Anyways, George is acting a little weird but it's nothing that Dream is bothered by. He likes it, likes being close to George and loving him the way friends do, having him in his bubble like he does Sapnap and Karl and Quackity and Bad. He's still fine with it.

It's when they're sitting at Puffy's one day, George and Dream pressed close on one side and Karl, Quackity, and Sapnap on the other. Karl and George get up to use the bathroom, and Dream grins at him when George reaches out to mess up his hair before he hops away. Dream turns back towards the other two, breaking the eye-contact between George and him first, and ready to resume the conversation about useless mods when—

"Are you two fucking dating or something?" Quackity drops, and Dream blanks.

"What?"

Sapnap is staring at him, glances at the bathroom doors, and then looks back at Dream. Quackity is just gaping.

"No, seriously, what the hell did you just say? Dating?" Dream shakes his head, and glares at Sapnap in a move to defend himself. "You know that—"

"Nah, I'm not so sure on that one anymore, man," Sapnap whistles, and leans back in the seat far enough that the leather creaks. "You did not see what I just saw."

Quackity nods solemnly, and Dream whips around in his seat. As expected, George and Karl are out of sight, and Dream sits back down. "What?"

His stupid bestfriend just purses his lips and looks around, avoiding Dream's gaze like the plague. "I don't know if I should—" Dream kicks him under the table and Sapnap hisses. "Jesus, no need to get physical. All I wanna say is that I saw that same lovestruck expression you have around George on Gogy's face just now. While he was looking at you. Sickening, I tell ya."

Dream frowns and leans against the back of the booth. There's iced teas in front of them, and he almost reaches for one, but isn't sure he could swallow right now. "That's not funny, Sapnap."

"I'm not joking, dude. Alex, back me up here man!"

Dream swings his glare onto Quackity who immediately flinches and holds his hands up in mock surrender. "Easy, big guy. Snapnaps isn't kidding around, I saw it too. You're just blind."

"He—" Dream stops and traces an invisible design onto the table, "George and I are friends. He doesn't think of me that way."

Sapnap and Quackity share a look unbeknownst to Dream, and quickly play a game of rock-paper-scissors just under the lip of the table. Dream looks up just as Sapnap throws a rock and loses for the second time. He sighs and folds his fingers on the table, kicking Quackity under the table as petty revenge.

"Dude. I don't know what else to tell you, but you gotta trust me on this one. I'm not so blind that

I've missed how he's changed a little around you and I know you have to—" Dream opens his mouth but Sapnap raises a hand to stop him, "—so I think that you should shoot your shot. Kobe. Swoosh. The whole deal."

"I suck at basketball," Dream grumbles, and lays his head on the table. It's cool against his cheek, and his next sigh fogs the surface. "I still don't believe you."

"Whatever, man, you can't say I didn't tell you so. You're just an idiot."

"Who's an idiot?" George's voice scares him a bit, and Dream watches him slide smoothly into the seat beside Dream. George looks at him, amused, and pokes the cheek not flattened by the table. "Are we talking about this idiot?"

Dream grins and smacks George's hand away. "You're the idiot, I'm just existing peacefully."

Sapnap snorts at that, and Dream lifts his head to see Karl worm his way back into the seat. Quackity gets crushed against the window, and Sapnap wraps an arm around his partner to tug him closer. Dream watches his friends hand play with Karl's waistband, nothing more than a simple touch and brush of the fingers, and can't stop his gaze from darting over at George.

George, who evidently isn't paying attention anymore, is nearly dressed head to toe in Dream's clothing. He paired the gray hoodie with the black windbreaker, and Dream thinks he looks adorable swimming in the warm clothing. For someone who is supposed to be used to chilly England weather, George sure layers like it's his life mission. Dream loves it.

"What are you getting?" George murmurs at him and picks up the folded menu Niki left them. Dream inches closer, leans an arm on the back of the booth so he doesn't topple over into George. George just glances up at him briefly before tilting the menu so Dream can read it easier. "Do you want to share something? I'm not that hungry."

Dream hums and points at a few things with his free hand. George's fingers brush his. "We could get this one, there's fries on the side too."

"Works for me."

"I'll pay."

"Dream!" George folds the menu and smacks Dream in the hand with it. Dream just wheezes and retracts it, protecting himself from a barrage of attacks. George is trying his best to hide his grin, Dream can tell, "You paid last time, let me do it!"

"Last time? Hm, I don't remember who paid, guess I'll just start this round again." Dream waits for his chance and snags the menu out of George's hand. George lets him, and Dream grins innocently at the other as he pouts. "It's not a big deal, don't worry."

George shifts in the seat, and Dream realizes that they're pressed together, thigh to thigh and shoulder to shoulder. He doesn't move away. George doesn't either. "I know, I know, but I can pay for you sometimes too, okay?"

Dream melts at the earnest tones in his voice, and gently ruffles George's hair. He resists the urge to pull him in and plant a kiss on his head. "I know, Georgie, you can get the next one, promise."

His hand lingers on George for a second too long. When Niki comes to collect their orders, Dream pretends he doesn't see the look he's getting from Sapnap and definitely pretends he doesn't see the text preview of an image on his phone, one that depicts two bodies and the background colors of

the booth. George is blissfully unaware, and Dream makes sure to clear the text from his recent notifications before he hands it to George to play Minecraft on during the wait.

Food comes quickly as there's few patrons in the diner, and Dream splits the chicken fingers in half so they cool faster. George burns his fingers on the fries, and Dream can only laugh at him. Sapnap tears into a burger and even though he has his own, Karl snatches his fries when he isn't looking. Quackity gets wings that smell amazing and Dream ends up bargaining a chicken strip for a spicy one.

As always, lunch is followed by a few options; people splitting to head to class, jobs, or like Dream, heading home to take a fucking nap. The food is amazing and the afternoon sun is hitting just right, and he's ready to fall asleep on the table. The background noise of George laughing and the other three talking is perfect and safe, and Dream feels his head bob where it's propped up on his hand. He blinks, a little groggy, and feels a hand touch his. He looks, and meets the soft gaze of George.

"Tired?" George laughs behind the words but Dream can see the little bit of concern. It's very rare that the blond feels secure enough to nod off in public, so George must've noticed. Dream shrugs, and George tightens his grip on his hand before pulling. "We're heading out, don't forget to tip and get home safely."

Dream scoots out of the booth and drops a twenty on the table for Sapnap, who is looking at him with a smug grin. He nearly forgets about his tiredness for trying to kick him again, but George's tugging is more persistent now and Dream is helpless to him. He follows like a lost puppy, and nearly sways against George when he finally stands up. George just tightens his gentle hold on Dream's hand and Dream sighs happily.

"Bye guys, see you later." His farewell is split by a yawn, and George huffs out a laugh as the other three wave at him, cooing goodbyes at him like he's a baby. George turns away, Dream in tow, and Sapnap makes a kissy face at him. Karl giggles, and Dream flips them all off.

The wind wakes him up a little, and George looks up at him as he shivers. They're still holding hands, and without thinking Dream readjusts his grip so their fingers are laced. George's cheek's redden but that could just be the wind. "Do you want to come back to mine for a nap? I have some things to do with my editing so I'll be quiet."

Dream nods, tongue thick in his mouth because he's tired and vulnerable and George didn't drop his hand. A shudder crawls up his spine, itching his skull and tingling in all the right places when George starts walking, dragging Dream's heart with him. He didn't do this before, even pre-Aaron era. They never really held hands, and it's driving Dream crazy.

They chat a bit as they walk, and Dream finds himself lost again in the whirlwind that is George. He talks about his photoshoots, the semi-professional one he just got a business email about and the pleasure shoots that he takes as a break. George talks about wanting to adopt a cat, since his apartment is pet-friendly and Aaron was worried about the responsibility.

Dream offers to take him to a shelter soon, and George actually stops the process of unlocking his door to turn around with big eyes and a plea on his lips. Dream is a weak man, and they make a plan to find a good one after the nap and go as soon as possible.

It's like entering George's apartment flips Dream's switch from *hm, tired* to *Jesus, find a soft place now* because he yawns as he takes his shoes off. His hand feels empty without George's in it, but George patiently waits for him to remove his sneakers and then they walk further in. Some of the blank picture frames have been replaced, and George has a bit more clutter around that includes

cups, sweaters, blankets, and pillows. Dream even sees that there's a surplus of flowers and plants now, and grins because half of them are ones that Dream brought him.

George doesn't bother turning lights on; the sun that peeks in is enough for them as Dream rounds the couch. George sits on one side and pulls a laptop onto his lap, and Dream collapses beside him with the full intent to curl up and sleep for an hour. Dream falls onto his side, his head brushing George's thigh. "Wake me up when you think I've slept long enough."

A hand falls into Dream's hair. He sighs and reaches up blindly, holds George's wrist and keeps it there. George's leg bounces as he laughs, and Dream curls their fingers together again. There. Not so empty anymore.

"Alright, Dream. I will."

They don't say anything more, and Dream drifts off to the sound of keys clicking and George's breathing. He isn't totally asleep, but in a weird nap daze that he never wants to leave; time is fluid and he's unsure of how much has passed. He feels thick and heavy and safe, pressed against George's leg. Dream sighs deeply, and wakes up a bit more when George retracts his hand. "G'rge?"

"Hold on, Dream, give me a sec," floats down his reply, and Dream whines softly as George's heat disappears. Dream stretches out a bit into the extra space, assumes George is leaving, but the heat returns as a line along his front and Dream instinctively snuggles into it. He wraps his arms around it and pulls, pressing his back into the couch and the heat into his chest. Dream blinks as the heat shifts, and looks down blearily to see the back of George's neck.

"George?" Dream rasps, and feels the shiver that races down the others body. Cold, his brain supplies, George is just cold, and Dream tightens his arm around George's waist and tugs him closer. A hand finds his against George's chest, and Dream hums his satisfaction. Their legs tangle, and Dream has never felt warmer in his life.

"Go to sleep, Dream. I'll be here when you wake up." George's voice is hardly above a whisper, and Dream presses his face into the back of George's neck. He inhales, gets a whiff of his own cologne and something distinctly *George* and doesn't think he could be happier than this. George's chest bounces on an amused inhale, and Dream's eyes close as he speaks again. "What did you say last time? 'Heaven'? I think you just like sleeping with me."

Somewhere in his consciousness, Dream knows it's a bad idea but he's too heady to care right now. He brushes his lips over the knob of George's spine, rolls in the shudder and the tightening of fingers on his own it earns him, and licks his lips to chase the taste.

"I th'nk I jus' like you..."

---

When Dream wakes up tangled on the couch with George nearly two hours later, George is wrapped up in his arms and on his phone looking for nearby shelters. When Dream shifts, he has hazy memories of heat and kisses and small fingers but they're blown away by the watery gaze George gives him when looking at previews of cats on the shelters page.

There's about three hours before it closes and it's actually super close to his apartment, so Dream drinks the rest of George's apple juice and they head out to go find George a companion.



George reaches for his hand when they exit the apartment building, and Dream has never felt anything more right. It hurts, almost, with how much he wants it but can't have it.

The shelter is clean smelling and homey, and the elderly lady at the front leads Dream and George into the back to look at the cats. George doesn't really have a preference, so she offers to just release them into the cat room and find one that he likes and would like to take home. Dream follows him after the lady invites him too.

"Oh, your boyfriend can come with as well! There's no shortage of cats." Her grin is warm and Dream goes to correct her, but George just smiles softly and looks at Dream.

"You coming?" Scratch that, this hurts more than any hand in his ever could. Dream just nods dumbly, steps into through a door into a short hallway and then through another. The lady opens the last door and George inhales sharply. "Oh, Dream, look at them..."

Cats. Just cats, everywhere. It makes Dream miss his own, but Patches is safe at home with his mother and sister. The lady mentions a few rules for them, and then leaves with a small grin and a wave. George coos and crouches, and Dream just looks around.

The room is white walled with various decorations and couches, and for every cushion there seems to be a cat to match it. Cat trees, little hidey tents, and toys are scattered around. Dream takes one step and immediately a fluffy white cat wraps himself around his legs. Dream reaches down to pet it and glances up to George, but stops at the sight that reaches him.

George is sitting on the ground, crosslegged and covered in fluffy felines begging for his attention. There's a calico one on his knee, a dark grey one crawling over his shoulders, and George has one lighter grey baby cradled in his arms. He's smiling down at it, fingers running through it's fur and soft eyes trained on it. Dream realizes very quickly that that's the cat George is leaving with, and George looks up at him with a wide grin.

"Dream, look how cute they are!" The cat in his arms reaches up with two paws and bats at George's cheeks, and George giggles. "I want all of them, what the hell."

Dream laughs and sits down beside George, reaching in to pet the cradled cat and gaining some climbers of his own. The white cat from before is sitting on a tree now, and there's a few black ones that are meowing at Dream. He pets them all, switching often and gently. George just continues talking to the one in his arms, and Dream is already thinking of what he needs for basic cat care. Litterbox, cat carrier, and food dishes for sure, plus the actual food and probably some toys. George has enough couch space that he doesn't need to worry about a cat bed, but maybe they should grab lint rollers in case—

"Dream? What do you think of this one?" George isn't looking at him, but he offers the feline gently and Dream takes it. The baby meows at him, and Dream feels his heart melt. George has good taste. "I really like him."

Dream opens his mouth to answer but is interrupted by a paw batting his nose. Dream snorts and George laughs as he takes the cat back. "I think he's perfect. He's already telling me to shut up, you're a match made in heaven."

George just grins, and Dream wonders how his cheeks don't hurt.

They leave the shelter a while later, papers signed and cat adopted. George buys a carrier and the few essentials from the shelter place, the lady having extras available and ready to be sold, and Dream carries the cat home while George speed runs a list of things he needs for the cat. Dream

tells him they're terrible cat owners, and George just smacks his shoulder. It's closer to the evening when Dream puts Cat—*why would you even name it that George!*—in the bathroom with the door open so he has a safe place to explore from, and George sits at the counter while Dream cooks chicken for a quick supper.

"Dream."

"Hm?"

"Can I—" Dream pauses and glances over his shoulder at George. He looks nervous. "Can I ask you something?"

Dream blinks and pans the chicken piece into a bowl so they don't burn. He moves towards the other ingredients and starts piling together chicken wraps. "Yeah, go ahead. Is something wrong?"

"Do you think I'm unlovable?"

Dream nearly drops his wrap. He whips around to look at George, who is staring at the counter like he could read his answer from there. Dream blinks, processes his words again, and George seems to shrink further into himself as the silence stretches. "You know what, nevermind, I—"

"I think you're the easiest thing to love, George." Dream feels the words fall from his mouth before he can catch them, and George glances up at him. Dream's hands are dirty with food toppings and there's a half-rolled wrap on the plate behind him and George feels like he's unlovable. "I don't think you're unlovable. I think that some people don't know how to treat those they love properly, and you got the short end of the stick. Don't ever think that of yourself, because Sapnap loves you like a brother, Karl and Quackity love you just as much."

Dream inhales, and George gets the jump on him.

"And you?"

*And me?*

*I love you like you could never love me.*

The question burns in his chest and Dream smiles through the pain.

"I want to say I love you the most, but I feel like Sapnap would fight me over it."

*It hurts.*

George nods, laughs to himself and shakes his head.

"Thank you, Dream. I don't know why but it was just bothering me."

The tension is dispelled and Dream wishes they could stop having conversations like this in this poor exact room. He turns back to the chicken wraps and rolls them like he didn't just tear his own heart out in front of the other. He pretends the effort of trying to make a nice wrap is why his fingers are shaking and Dream chews his lip against the rush of emotions he experienced in such a short time. "Of course, George. I'm always here if you need to talk."

"I know, Dream. What are you making, by the way? It smells good."

"Mm, something with chicken. Want to see if we can lure Cat out of his hiding spot?"

---

"George," Dream whispers, "George, they're leaving."

George grumbles and snuggles deeper into Dream's shoulder. "So? J'st lemme sleep."

Dream groans softly and looks around for Sapnap, who's leaning against the hallway and laughing behind his hand. Karl is putting his shoes on and snickering with Quackity, and Bad looks like he wants to help but Skeppy is convincing him to let Dream suffer. Dream glares at Sapnap as the other raises his phone at him, and the camera shutter goes off.

They were just watching movies, like a typical, fun Thursday movie night. Dream had shown up after work and walked in on the six of them watching and crying over *The Lovely Bones* and nearly dropped his stacked drink trays in his laughter. Cat became more comfortable around people and in George's home, and had jumped off the couch to come and greet Dream at the door; George had just helped him with the Starbucks drinks and they all settled down to finish the movie.

The seven of them went through two more movies, including *The Silence of the Lambs* and *The Princess Bride*. Dream has sat between Karl and George, and George had started falling asleep just after the wedding, slumping over on Dream. Cat had jumped into his lap sometime during the movie as well, pinning Dream beneath sleeping bodies from all angles. Now, the movie is over and those who can freely move are heading out. Karl shut off the television and George had barely stirred, and now they're *abandoning* him. Jerks.

"Goodnight, Dreamie, enjoy your stay!" Sapnap calls softly, not so loud to wake George and still tease Dream. Dream just shakes his head and waves goodbye to his friends, listening to the door click shut behind the last one and their voices fade in the hallway. Dream licks his lips and looks down at his restraints.

Cat stirs when Dream runs a hand down his back, adjusting with a soft *mrrp* as Dream eases him off his lap with one large hand. George is another story, one that Dream doesn't know how to go about moving. He settles for poking him again, hating how much he loves the other draped on his shoulder, his hand tangled in Dream's shirt and hooked in his beltloop.

"George, it's time to get ready for bed."

"Mmn."

"George," Dream coos, and blows cool air over the ear he can see. The apartment's fan kicks off, and Dream is left in the silence of George's breathing and his own heart. "Baby, it's time for bed."

The brunet shifts, and Dream almost moves to get up, but George just lifts his head and stares at Dream. Dream's breath hitches; there's mere inches between their noses and Dream can smell the sweet matcha on George's breath. Cat paws his way onto Dream's lap, but jumps down after a second. His legs feel cold.

"Why d'you call me that?" George whispers, and Dream can't breathe. He licks his lips and feels the slightest thrill when George's sleepy gaze drops.

"Sorry, I'll stop."

George's brow furrows and Dream wants to reach out and smooth it. His fingers twitch in the

aborted idea and George uses a hand to grab them. Dream can't look away, not even as George laces their fingers together and squeezes. He doesn't know what's going on, but he doesn't want it to stop even if it kills him.

The space between them is filled with tension and hot breaths. Dream's mouth feels dry, exposed and flayed open while in George's valence. George swallows; Dream hears his throat click and *aches* as he watches George's tongue peek out to wet his lips. This is different than before. This is different, but it's not exactly new. Dream knows what this feels like, has drowned in moments like this, but...

George tenses his jaw for a second and then he's moving again, swinging a leg over Dream and dragging the hand not in Dream's up his chest and against his collarbone. Dream's free hand flies to George's hip, steadying him although he needs the stability himself, because George is so close, so close, and Dream's heart can't take it.

Dream knows what this feels like, but he doesn't know what it feels like to have those moments reciprocated.

"George," he manages, and George just keeps tracing circles. Dream swears his skin burns under the touch.

"Do you remember all those weeks ago when-when you asked me if I was happy?" George settles in Dream's lap and Dream can't stop the way his hand squeezes. "It was after I talked everything out with Aaron, the first time I thought we were going to be okay. You asked me if I was happy."

Dream shakes on his inhale. All his senses are bombarded by George. "You told me you thought so."

"I thought wrong." George smiles softly, and raises their joined hands to his lips. Dream can only watch as George presses a soft kiss to his knuckles, the same ones Dream bruised all those weeks ago, "I was wrong. I was happy, but not as much as I could be. I wasn't as happy with him as I was when you were around, or when you laughed or when you took care of me." George's voice breaks on the last few words and Dream sits up under him, jostling the other and pressing them close. George blinks rapidly, and Dream-

"I was so stupid to think there was anyone other than you," George breathes, and Dream is so, so helpless.

"Me?" Dream whispers, the words catching on his tongue and tripping over themselves, "You want me?"

George nods, so miniscule that if they weren't so close perhaps Dream would miss it. His heart swells, presses against his ribcage and threatens to kill him. Dream grasps at George, suddenly desperate for pressure and George leans into him, delivering what he needs. Dream pulls him that much closer. Dream studies his eyes, flicking back and forth over his face like he's going to find a lie. George just nods again, and Dream doesn't know what to do with it. George is just looking at him, and Dream can read every emotion in his face.

*All I wanna say is that I saw that same lovestruck expression you have around George on Gogy's face just now.*

"You—" Dream's voice gives out, rough and ragged, "You—I didn't know. I d-didn't think I could mean more to you."

George rubs circles into Dream's chest; the blond wonders if he can feel the staccato of his heart. "You mean everything to me, Clay. Even before I started seeing him, and then I saw less and less of you and realized I wanted you the same way I had him. I felt selfish at the time, and it was only when he pointed it out that I realized I had found a temporary replacement. Nobody could replace you, and I'm so sorry that I hurt you with it."

Dream is drowning and he's not sure he wants to be saved.

"George—"

"Clay." George trails his hand higher, holds the side of Dream's neck and forces him to make eye contact. Dream is already struggling, chest heaving and heart dripping wax into his lungs. George just tilts his head, smiles something soft and private and something that Dream didn't think he could ever have from him, and— "Clay, I love you. I'm in love with you, and I'm so, *so* sorry I made you wait this long for me."

Dream shakes under him and cups George's cheek. George grabs his wrist, presses it closer, and keeps his gaze on Dream's as he kisses his palm. The contact burns in the best way.

"Say it again."

George melts above him, and leans closer.

"I love you, Clay."

Dream closes his eyes briefly, lets it wash over him.

"Again."

There's a soft chuckle and another kiss to his hand. "I love you. So, so much."

"Heh," Dream breathes, and opens his eyes to see George staring back at him, dimly lit by the light over his stove and swaddled in Dream's red sweatshirt. He's on Dream's lap, in Dream's clothes, kissing Dream's hand and telling him he loves him. This is... this is everything he wanted. Everything he wished he had.

Everything he *has*.

"George, *please*, can I kiss you?"

George's grin is enough already, and Dream doesn't know how he'll be able to stand tasting it.

It's sweet; George's grin tastes like matcha and the sun at dusk and a hint of desperation (or maybe that's just Dream). Dream sits up into it, presses harder into the touch that George is offering and swallows the first sound that escapes him. Dream clutches at his hips and his cheek, pulling him in and tilting his head just enough—George whines, and Dream licks it off his lips.

They part for half a second, just enough for Dream to open his eyes and catch the flutter of George's before he's pulled back under and into the lure of his lover. George's hand slides up into his hair and tightens, and Dream makes a noise that George returns. His thighs tighten around Dream's hips when Dream licks into his mouth, slotting them their heads sideways so he can get deeper, ruin him from the inside out just as George had always done to Dream.

The sweetest revenge, when it is great for the giver and even greater for the recipient.

George moans when Dream leaves his mouth and trails down, exploring skin he wasn't allowed to before and preening in the noises and reactions he pulls from George. He likes the soft spot under his jaw, where he can feel the rapid pulse of George's heartbeat against his lips. Dream sighs against his skin and George *trembles* through a gasp of his name. The hand in his hair tightens when he moves down to nip George's collarbone, and the brunet uses his grip to drag him back up. Dream grins into it, and the kiss turns savory between them.

Teeth nip bottom lips and fingers dig into skin; it doesn't get far but its *heavy* and tinged with a certain release that comes after the desperation is expelled. Dream's head is swimming in the pool that i his lover and he's running out of air, but so long as George keeps kissing him and murmuring his name between wet slides of mouths and fingers then he would never stop.

"Clay," his name is a whisper on George's exhale and they part with a slick sound that could cause shivers lest they were cold. Dream pants, grinning when he realizes George's breaths are in the same pattern and the older is barely held together by his hands on his body. Compared to the last time Dream held George together, he much rather this lead in events. "Please."

Dream knows what he wants; he knows for sure now. "I love you, George. I've loved you for so long, I-I'm happy that you've caught up to me."

George leans in and presses their forehead together, wet and hot on his mouth when he leans in for another kiss. Dream sighs into it, holds him there with a gentle hand on his head until George is panting all over again. Dream laughs softly, brushes his thumb under George's lip because he can, and George's tongue comes out to skim the tip of it. Dream's chest hurts, but now it's a pain that he embraces because it feels so *good*. "George, we should go to bed."

George raises a single brow and Dream nearly snorts. "You look tired, sweetheart, and it's late."

The brunet shifts in Dream's lap. "You'll stay the night?"

Dream smiles. He grabs George's hand, and kisses his knuckles so soft that the flush across George's cheeks spreads.

"I'll be here when you wake up."

They fall asleep that night, wrapped up safely in each other. Dream holds him close now that he can, and freely presses kisses to the back of George's neck and shoulders. George just squirms and laughs, tries not to jostle Cat too much and giggle loud enough to wake the neighbors. The moonlight streams across his bed, illuminating George's face enough that Dream spends more time studying it than he does paying attention to George speak.

"Dream! You're not even listening."

"I am, I am," Dream laments, and snuggles his face deeper into George's chest. They've switched positions, and George has his arms looped over Dream's shoulders. His knees keep poking Dream in the thighs, but it's fine. "I still feel like I should apologize, since I lowkey ruined your relationship."

George huffs and pulls Dream closer to him. Dream goes easily. "Shut up, you did nothing wrong. It was a mess, and now it's over and I have something that is better than *that* ever was."

Dream definitely feels like he's winning, knows he got the best thing available when George falls asleep with his cheek pressed to Dream's hair, halfway through a sentence about getting new shelves for plants and Dream has never loved more. He's never *felt* loved more, not as he tries to

shift and George whines a mangled version of his name in his sleep and Dream tries not to wriggle around again.

He falls asleep wrapped up in George just like he always has been, but this George doesn't want him as a friend.

George doesn't want him as a friend because he wants him as *more*, and he's *happy*, and *God*, that's all Dream ever wanted.

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"You mean to tell me there's pictures of us I've never seen?"

"Well, yeah, because I didn't know you wanted to smash me at that point."

"Sma—Clay!"

"What?! Am I wrong?"

"..."

"Just say it, Georgie, you wanted to slam—"

"Just shut up and give me those stupid dandelions before you drop them, idiot. Now, have fun at work or I'll tell Wilbur to fire you."

"You wouldn't."

"I would. Bye now, love."

"Hey, George?"

"Hm?"

"You look so good in my green."

The bell chimes, leaving Dream alone in the flower shop for the last hour of his shift. He sees George's red cheeks through the front windows and grins to himself.

Yeah, he really does look good in green.

## Chapter End Notes

thank you for sticking around for the second chapter:)  
i really enjoyed writing this, and i hope u enjoyed reading it just as much<3

## End Notes

come say hi on [twitter!](#)

as always, yell at me in the comments and stay safe<3

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